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To what extent do the different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence the organisational culture of The Company in those places and how does this impact on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace?

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A [minor]dissertation submitted in [*partial*] *fulfilment* of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Workplace Change and Labour Law

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

This dissertation attempts to give a better understanding of how the different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence organisational culture at The Company and how this impacts on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace. The hypothesis of this study is that race and 'laid-backness' are key differentiating factors between The Company in Cape Town and in Johannesburg.

This is a descriptive case study that mixes both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collecting and analysing data, however it is primarily a qualitative study. The study focuses on two branches of the same company. 43 out of a total of 138 black African managers were surveyed and 22 of these were interviewed. The selection was a good cross-section of all middle and senior black African managers, as well as from both genders. A questionnaire comprising of a 21-point values survey and a series of open-ended unstructured and structured questions was used in the quantitative data collection process. A semi-structured interview schedule was used in the qualitative data collection process. The qualitative data was analysed using Miles and Huberman's (2004) two-level coding process with the assistance of Nvivo and the quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics with the assistance of Statistica.

The findings at The Company suggest that there are large differences between Cape Town and Johannesburg, which can be attributed to the different social contexts where the major differential is race, however 'laid-backness' appears to be less of a differentiating factor than originally thought. This affects the way black African managers negotiate identity in the workplace and they have adopted strategies that help them negotiate their identity in the workplace. The choices of these strategies differ in each social context. In Cape Town there is a much higher incidence of race and racism, whereas in Johannesburg there is a very low incidence. This affects motivation and productivity in black African managers especially where their sense of belonging in the organisation is challenged. Johannesburg is progressing quickly in its adoption of New Capitalist principles that has provided black African's with a

platform to create a new African capitalism, whereas Cape Town is still largely stuck in an Old Capitalist racist enclave that frustrates black African advancement.

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## 1. Introduction

Large South African corporations have a legacy of being dominated by Western Industrial Eurocentric culture. In the last twenty years, the corporate environment has changed significantly. Apartheid policies that discriminated against non-whites for forty years were abolished and even before the change in political dispensation in 1994, many South African businesses started hiring black people for positions in management. There has been a marked shift in hiring policies and the need to include black people in management positions has been enforced by the Employment Equity legislation of 1998. Companies that don't conform to the requirements of the legislation are penalised. The democratic government is committed to rectifying the wrongs of Apartheid which was designed to favour white people. The Employment Equity legislation is one of the tools used to change the demographic profile of organisations so that they better represent the demographics of the country. These changes have brought about challenges for managers who must now manage a diverse working environment where many more black people are now working in companies that are still white, male dominated and based on Western business principles. Many black African employees struggle to identify with the corporate culture which is dominated by white males.

The challenges are even greater for black African managers in that they are required to take responsibility for creating, implementing and adopting the corporate culture of an organisation. Where the organisation they work for is dominated by Western cultural influences, this can clash with their own culture resulting in an uncomfortable situation. Managers are forced to make decisions about what is important to them in their working lives and in many instances this requires the negotiation of identity.

The Social Identity and Organisation Research Group (SI-ORG) at the University of Cape Town is examining the challenges that middle and senior black African managers encounter in one of the largest multinationals in South Africa. Among other things SI-ORG is investigating the identity strategies black African managers adopt in response to the discursive practices of the company that attempt to re-socialise employees by selecting and shaping their values, attitudes and kinds of orientations in



order to fit the requirements of the organisational culture of the company. In the initial findings black African managers report some significant differences between the organisational culture in Cape Town and Johannesburg. In the Cape Town branch of the company black employees regularly encounter racial discrimination whereas black African managers in the Johannesburg branch report very little racial discrimination. The other major distinguishing feature is that the organisational culture in Cape Town is described as “laid-back” whereas the opposite is said to be true of the way things are done at the Johannesburg branch. Cape Town is said to be a laid-back place and despite its liberal image, many would say that it has serious social problems linked to ‘race’ and racism. Johannesburg, on the other hand, is described as fast-paced and cosmopolitan. Studies of organisational culture ought to pay more attention to the social context in which companies are located and the influence of the local context on the organisational culture. Where organisations are located in different geo-social contexts the organisational culture is likely to be influenced by, among other variables, the immediate social environment. This is important if one wants to understand issues of belonging (or alienation) of employees in an organisation. I suspect that social environment outside the company significantly influences organisational culture inside the company, which in turn influences the sense of belonging of employees and the identity strategies they adopt at work. Hence my central research question is: To what extent do the different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence the organisational culture of The Company in those places and how does this impact on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace?

The company that I have studied is currently going through a transition period from an “Old Way” of doing business to a “New Way” of doing business. This transition is seen as a business imperative as the company is endeavouring to compete on an international platform. The competition faced by this company has forced it to move towards what Gee et al call the “New Work Order” that “...creates new social identities or new kinds of people: new leaders and new workers... who are supposed to dissolve the separation between their lives outside work and their lives inside it” (Gee et al., 1996: xiii). Implicit in this new work order is the rationale that issues around race (i.e. discrimination, differentiation based on race, etc) has no place in the ‘New Capitalist business’. New Capitalism has always “been able to work between

the different ethnically- and racially-inflected labor forces” (Hall, 1997: 29). The Company is emphasising the importance of keeping up with global trends and becoming more profitable and efficient in order to be competitive in the global market. The implementation of these concepts is being met with varying degrees of success. The environment in Johannesburg is more conducive to the adoption of New Capitalism. It is fast paced and energetic, and this is attractive to young up-and-coming urban Black professionals. Cape Town is stuck in the ways of the Old Work Order, where the environment lacks energy (has a more laid-back approach) and racial discrimination is still evident.

There are a number of ways that the core issues of this dissertation could be investigated. Race and racism, and the way it affects organisations is a topic that spans across fields of study from Urban Geography and African Studies to Sociology and Anthropology. My background is in Psychology, Human Resources and Industrial Sociology hence I will be approaching these common issues from a Social Psychological/Industrial Sociological approach. Ideally I would have liked to do a comparative study of black and white managers using the white managers’ as a control group but this would have made it a much larger study and beyond the scope of this dissertation.

My dissertation grows out of the work of SI-ORG and, although I draw on some theoretical aspects developed by SI-ORG and use data collected by the SI-ORG, my study is independent in that it explores a theme that is not explored by SI-ORG.

## **Value of the Study**

This study holds considerable value for white managers mentoring and managing black African managers, particularly if the organisation is largely white male dominated. For black African managers this study also holds value because some individuals may feel that they are alone in the challenges that they face as a result of the organisational culture of the company they work for. This study may highlight the fact that they are not alone in their experiences. In addition individual black African

managers may also benefit from gaining a better understanding of how other black African managers manage these challenges and what strategies they adopt. At a more general level, this study could be useful in educating the general public in the differences between Cape Town and Johannesburg and how this impacts on black African managers.

## **Methodology**

This study mixes both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collecting and analysing data, however it is primarily a qualitative study. The study focuses on two offices, one in Cape Town and the other in Johannesburg, of a large multi-national organisation. The 2005 Company Statistics indicate that there are 138 middle, senior and executive black African managers in the Cape Town and Johannesburg sections of this organisation, this study covered 43 of these managers in two locations. 28 were from Cape Town and 15 were from Johannesburg. The selection is a good cross-section of all middle and senior black African managers in these two contexts as well as from both genders. All 43 respondents were subjected to a questionnaire survey and 22 of the respondents were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. The qualitative data was analysed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) two level coding process with the assistance of Nvivo. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

## **Key Findings**

The findings show that social context outside of the workplace does influence the corporate culture. The social context in Cape Town is still highly racist and that influences the corporate culture at The Company. The Johannesburg office however, experiences relatively few racist influences. Cape Town is still stuck in an Old Capitalist mentality, where the structure of the business is very hierarchical, employees are given less responsibility and there is more of a local focus as opposed to a focus on global competition. Although it is transitioning towards the New Capitalist ideology (greater responsibility, accountability and commitment required by employees in an increasingly competitive and globalised market) that has largely been

adopted by the Johannesburg office, Cape Town is struggling to get there. The experience of black African managers in each office is different due to these differences. Black African managers experience greater exclusion in the Cape Town office than in the Johannesburg office. As a result the negotiation strategies that the managers adopt to negotiate identity within the workplace are influenced by these differences in the social. The strategies chosen by the managers in the Cape Town office were predominantly defensive or integrating, whereas the strategies chosen by the Johannesburg managers were largely capitulating or colluding. The different strategy choices highlight the differences in the work environment.

This dissertation investigates the influence of race and laid-backness on the social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg, how this influences the organisational culture of the company and how black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace. I will start by outlining the conceptualisation of my research problem linking it with the theory and concepts that I have used to develop my analytical framework. Chapter 3 will outline the methods I have used in my study and how I analysed my data. Chapter 4 will discuss The Company culture and how the social environment affects black African managers in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Chapter 5 is a summary of the findings of the study followed by Chapter 6 that is a discussion of those findings. I will be making reference to the literature on the topic in the discussion section. I will then conclude in Chapter 7 with a summary of the study and any recommendations or suggestions that came out of the study.

## Chapter 2: Conceptualisation

My central research question is: To what extent do the different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence the organisational culture of the company in those places and how does this impact on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace?

In this chapter I will be discussing the various concepts and theory that are core to this study, these are: 'organisational culture', 'social environments/contexts', 'laid-backness', 'the New Work Order/New Capitalism', 'socialisation', 'borders', 'identity', 'identity strategies' and 'values'.

### Organisational Culture

'Organisational culture' is a contested concept. There isn't one definitive definition because of the 'diversity of opinion' on what 'organisational culture' refers to (Brown, 1995:5). However there is an element of consistency in the multitude of definitions that have described this concept since the early 1950's when the first definitions emerged from industrial literature. Eldridge and Crombie (1974) present this definition:

*"The culture of an organisation refers to the unique configuration of norms, values, beliefs, ways of behaving and so on that characterise the manner in which groups and individuals combine to get things done. The distinctiveness of a particular organisation is intimately bound up with its history and the character-building effects of past decisions and past leaders. It is manifested in the folkways, mores, and the ideology to which members defer, as well as in the strategic choices made by the organisation as a whole."*

The 'unique configuration of norms, values, beliefs and ways of behaving' feature in a number of other definitions offered by authors such as Tunstall (1983), Morgan (1986) and Denison (1990) among others. Brown (1995: 41) states that there are three

sources or influences of organisational culture: “the societal or national culture within which an organisation is physically situated, the vision, management style and personality of an organisation’s founder or other dominant leader and the type of business an organisation conducts as well as the nature of its business environment.” Brown (1995: 41) goes on to say that “the broad social context in which an organisation subsists (has) a significant influence on its culture”. He states further that “the nature of the activities an organisation undertakes and the particular operating environment in which it subsists may have a profound effect on its culture” (Brown, 1995: 45). This is particularly pertinent to this study as I am trying to ascertain whether the social context outside of the organisation does indeed have a big influence on the organisational culture.

### **Social Environments/contexts**

Social environment refers to the immediate social context inside and/or outside of the workplace. The social context of each city has its own characteristics based on the dominant religions, traditions and cultures that prevail in the population. In the same vein, each organisation has its own ways of doing things. The leaders of that particular city or context have a certain amount of influence as does the types of businesses that the context is focussed on, for instance mining or tourism. Brown (1995: 45) states that “the particular operating environment in which (the organisation) subsists may have a profound effect on its culture”. The perpetuation of organisational culture occurs through processes of “preselection, socialisation and incorporation/rejection” (Brown, 1995: 54). Preselection is the process whereby an individual, with the help of company information that they have spent time investigating, select or deselect themselves for a job with an organisation. Socialisation will be discussed further below but essentially it is the informal and formal processes that inform employee’s behaviour, etc. For the purposes of this study, I am interested in the processes of socialisation and incorporation/rejection because once employees have been employed in the organisation they become subject to both formal and informal processes of socialisation. The important point that Brown makes is that the “continued subjection to organisational socialisation processes results in an individual either being incorporated or rejected” (Brown, 1995: 57). This incorporation/rejection process (or ‘sense of belonging’ as I will be referring

to it) is largely dependent on how effectively the employee socialises to the organisations' culture.

## **Race and Racism**

Race is a social construction that is recognised by physical appearance (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006: 3) however, Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban suggests that "race is not now, nor has it ever been, simply about the physical description of human variation. Since its origin in Western Science in the eighteenth century, race has been used both to classify and to rank human beings according to inferior and superior types" (2006: 6). Differentiation of ability by race has led to extreme discrimination in several parts of the world and particularly in South Africa. It was the corner stone of the Apartheid regime where whites deemed blacks to be inferior and this was tabled in the laws of the country for over forty years. Racism is a social, cultural and political problem (Pinxten & Preckler, 2006: 2) that not only takes into account racial difference but evaluates difference by ranking it into superior or inferior and higher or lower types; and makes judgements about good and bad behaviour as well as better or worse attributes (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006:4). 'Race' and 'racism' are still very much a part of the lives of many of South Africa's population as Justice Brigitte Mabandla (2005) states: "South Africa is a land of stark contrasts, and one of the major contrasts is between different racial groups."

## **Laid-backness**

The concept of 'laid-backness' came out of the interviews with respondents. The concept describes the attitudes towards work in Cape Town as opposed to attitudes in Johannesburg. It describes the relaxed holiday feeling in an environment or social context that is the antithesis of an environment that is driven, focussed and globally oriented. The concept has had little use in empirical work before this but I feel that the concept describes well the difference between work ethics in Cape Town and Johannesburg, in addition it is the commonly used term that is used to describe these attitudes, and hence I feel it is appropriate to use it.

## **The New Work Order/New Capitalism**

The New Work Order is based on a way of working that is influenced by the Western industrialised, first world countries. This is characterised by aggressive competition, a focus on cost cutting and efficiency with the desired outcome being quality products that are ahead of the competition. This is a constantly changing environment, expectations change quickly, products change and as a result workplaces have to keep changing to suit the changes in the market. This new work order is characterised by “new ways of acting, taking, thinking, valuing and being in the workplace” (Gee, 1996: xv). The new work order creates new kinds of social identities or to put it simply, new kinds of people.

Gee et al speak about Old Capitalism and New Capitalism. Old Capitalism is characterised by heavily structured hierarchies, mass production, huge staff numbers who are hired to follow directions and are not meant to have any control over the process they are a part of. Work in Old Capitalism was alienating (Gee et al, 1996: 7) although for some people it may have been comforting and signified the kind of stable, reliable job that they needed to provide them with a regular pay check. New Capitalism is driven by global hypercompetition, massive technological changes and the demands of increasingly sophisticated consumers. The emphasis for employees is on active knowledge and flexible learning (Gee et al, 1996: 27). Workers in a New Capitalist environment are required to “think and act critically, reflectively and creatively” (Gee et al, 1996: 7), which gives them the apparent freedom to be more creative but puts added pressure on workers to perform and commit to the organisation’s goals, vision and practices (Gee et al, 1996: 7). There are close similarities to the descriptions of the Cape Town branch and Old Capitalism, and the Johannesburg branch and New Capitalism.

In Chapter 5, I discuss Gee et al’s concepts of New Work Order and New Capitalism/Old Capitalism in greater detail.



## Socialisation

Socialisation is the perpetuation of organisational cultures through various informal and formal means in order to ensure that an employee (and thus all employees) adopt and live the culture of the organisation (Brown, 1995: 133). Burger and Luckman (1967) use the concept of socialisation in their work on the social construction of reality. They talk about two stages of socialisation, the first is primary socialisation which occurs during childhood and it is the first socialisation that an individual undergoes in order to become a member of society. Secondary socialisation is the “internalisation of institutional or institution-based ‘sub-worlds’” (Burger and Luckman, 1967: 158). Primary and secondary socialisation don’t always sit well together because secondary socialisation must always deal with an already formed self, an already internalised world, and the secondary socialisation needs to be superimposed on that already present reality, which can create problems when there isn’t consistency between the original (primarily socialised) reality and the secondary reality (Burger and Luckman, 1967: 160). This can create a clash of interests or more seriously a clash of identities. Corporate socialisation selects and shapes the employee so that they achieve an appropriate fit between the requirements of the organisational culture (values, beliefs and goals) and the character of those who work there (Casey, 1995:139). The emphasis is on the fit with the organisational culture however the person’s values and attitudes must correspond with those promoted by the organisation. Traits and attitudes that are useful to the working environment, e.g. aggressiveness and drive, are stimulated and rewarded but those traits and attitudes that aren’t seen as necessary or that are perceived to go against the organisational culture, e.g. being too outspoken, are discouraged and suppressed (Casey, 1995:139).

Those people who display more of the corporately undesired traits tend to experience more ‘intrapsychic conflict’. LaBier (in Casey, 1993: 83) has conducted studies on people working in highly competitive working environments who face huge pressure to conform to the organisation’s culture on a daily basis. His findings show that workers can be quite literally driven crazy. LaBier views the workplace organisation as a ‘psychostructure’ that shapes and selects certain ways of thinking and doing things in the worker according to the requirements of the organisation. Those traits

(i.e. values and attitudes) that are useful to the organisation are stimulated and reinforced whereas those that are not considered necessary or may hamper work are suppressed or thwarted (Casey, 1993: 84). In this way employees are moulded to the needs of the organisation. When this conflicts with the personal values and beliefs of individual employees the intrapsychic conflict or psychological discomfort as I will be describing it, forces workers into a situation where they have to 'deal with it', often at significant personal and mental cost. In 'dealing with' the psychological discomfort created by the inability to fit with the organisational culture, employees are sometimes forced to adopt strategies to negotiate the challenges in the workplace.

## **Borders**

Phelan, Davidson and Yu (1993) consider the conflict between the requirements of the organisation (i.e. company culture) and the personal values, attitudes and culture of the individual to be examples of what they term 'borders' and 'boundaries'. Borders are "real or perceived lines that are not neutral and that separate worlds not perceived as equal. When borders are present, movement and adaptation are frequently difficult because the knowledge and skills in one world are more highly valued and esteemed than those in another." (Phelan et al, 1993: 53) Boundaries are "real or perceived lines between worlds, settings or contexts that are neutral and where sociocultural components are perceived to be equal by the people in each setting. When boundaries exist, movement between worlds occurs with relative ease – social and psychological costs are minimal" (Phelan et al, 1993: 53). The term 'world' is used to refer to the cultural knowledge and behaviour "found within the boundaries of (employees') particular families, peer groups, and schools" (Phelan et al, 1993:53). Each world consists of values, beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses that are familiar to insiders (Phelan et al, 1993:53). The two worlds that are most pertinent to this study are the 'home world', which encompasses family, friends and everything that is outside of the work place, the 'corporate world'. Borders can be psychosocial, sociocultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, gender, or structural (Phelan et al, 1993: 57-8), in this case it is sociocultural. Borders cause stress and discomfort until they have been negotiated.

## **Identity**

Identity is “an amalgam comprised of the observable characteristics of a person, their values, lifestyle and social attitudes” (Burgess, 2002: 4).

Identity is created by a continuous process that is influenced by personal, social and environmental forces. The result of this is a stable, though not fixed, sense of identity that influences behaviour in a reasonably predictable manner (Burgess, 2002: 13).

Identity is made up of three major components: values, personality traits and demographic characteristics. As circumstances and situations change in a person's life, their identity causes an internal conversation in which the prevailing values, attitudes and beliefs are compared, and this can lead to internal conflicts that need to be resolved through internal dialogue and negotiation (Burgess, 2002: 14). A person's identity influences the way he/she interacts with the environment around them. Race is an important demographic characteristic that has become a major differential in South Africa. Because of the racial classification of the apartheid dispensation, race has become a major aspect of the identity of South Africans (Burgess, 2002: 84).

When a person's values or identity is challenged it causes internal conflicts especially when it involves a clash between the values and goals required in the working environment and those held by the individual. At The Company these internal conflicts are as a result of working in an environment where you are not necessarily considered an insider, where your sense of belonging is not established and is often regarded as false because you don't fit with the (informal) requirements of the organisation. The barrier or border to this sense of belonging (in this case) is race.

## **Identity Strategies**

This clash between the home/personal identity and the work identity requires the individual to negotiate his/her identity in order to fit with the requirements of the organisation. This can result in the suppressing or replacement of certain aspects of the individuals' goals, values and/or attributes while at work. In this case they may have to relinquish aspects of their more traditional African values or personal goals for those required by The Company, and they may be required to act or behave more

like the white men who have traditionally been the driving force of the organisation. Many black African managers do not experience a pronounced clash of identities as they are second or third generation urban dwellers that have little connection with their African cultural heritage, but for others the challenges are considerable.

“The self is affected by the processes of the new culture in two ways. It is assaulted, limited and diminished at the same time that it is comforted and sustained by the promise of the self-requirements of belonging, productivity and individual reward.” (Casey, 1993: 163) In order to manage the socialisation or colonisation process so that it causes the least amount of psychological discomfort Casey suggests that workers generate psychic strategies or self-styles. Depending on how much employees perceive they belong in the organisation will determine what strategy they adopt in defence of their own identity. According to Casey (1993: 163) Most employees fit into three clusters: defence, collusion and capitulation. Each strategy contains elements of the other strategies but each has their own discernible set of features.

- **Defensive Self**

The first strategy is the defensive self. Defence is the prevailing characteristic that is manifested in small-scale resistances. Defensive selves are often confused, scared, anxious and ambivalent to what is going on in the organisation, and will often criticize the company and their managers in private. Many defensives harbour fantasies of leaving the company and working somewhere else. They are ambivalent of the quality of their working lives and resentful of the ways the company demands and intrudes on their lives but they continue to work hard and give the impression that they are team players and are proud of their products. Despite this they are uncertain and fearful about their future (Casey, 1993: 164-5).

Casey describes three different types of defensive selves: the introverted defensive self, resistant defensive self and the frantic defensive self. The introverted defensive self is less overtly visible than the other defensives; they tend to avoid conflict, don't act out and don't engage in company politics. They are manifestly agreeable but not excessively and will express critical views about the company. They try to defend

themselves against the daily cultural assault by the company, but don't appear to be defensive. Introverted defensives are often women. (Casey, 1993: 166)

The resistant defensive self is similar to the introverted defensive but they are unspokenly defiant and mostly disagreeable. They do their jobs well but go along with the culture in a minimal sense. They are not as fierce as frantic defensives but may speak or act out when they feel threatened. Resistant defensives are mostly men and ethnic minorities (Casey, 1993:168)

Frantic defensives are visibly defensive. They often feel secure in their employment and know that they are valued by the company so this makes them bolder. It may also be because they cannot control their desperation (Casey, 1993: 168).

- **Colluded Self**

The second strategy is the colluded self. They are characteristically compliant, dependent on the company, ambitious, easily manipulated and those who are less senior can be over-agreeable, visibly displaying their total dedication and identification to the company. Colluded selves experience little discontinuity between their work life and their home life. They avoid and deny intra-psychic conflict by compulsively displaying their complicity with the corporate culture (Casey, 1993: 169).

There are two types of colluders: Compulsive colluders and passive colluders. Compulsive colluders are compulsively optimistic about the company, its products and their future within the company. This optimism acts as a buffer that filters negative messages. "The (unconscious) wish to identify with and obey the corporate superego requires the psyche to repress defensive individuation through independence and to exaggerate dependency and conformity" (Casey, 1993: 170)

Passive colluders have most of the characteristics of the compulsive colluder but not their intensity. They comprise mostly of an older group of employees whose experiences, memories and observations are constructed glowingly. They express little awareness that the company could possibly be different from the way that they

experience it and they aren't likely to express views that acknowledge this possible difference. They speak reverently about the company and serve in complete faith with untiring dedication (Casey, 1993: 173).

- **Capitulated Self**

The third strategy is the capitulated self. LaBier argues that the self is under a process of siege and assault from bureaucratic institutions. Many previously defensive selves become capitulated selves once they have been worn out by the company's insistent policies. Their final psychic defence is to capitulate but on their own terms.

"Capitulation contains elements of both defence and collusion, but both are restrained by strategic, instrumental pragmatism" (Casey, 1993: 175). Capitulated selves create self-boundaries to maintain their psychic stability. Capitulated selves are accommodating to the corporate colonization but for self-serving interests and goals, they like to believe that they have retained control over their situation and could leave at any opportunity. "Capitulation manifests an element of conscious as well as unconscious giving up, trading –off and rationalizing defeat" (Casey, 1993: 180).

There are two types of capitulators: the pragmatic capitulator and the reluctant capitulator. The pragmatic capitulator "adopts an air of "cool" self-control and ironic cynicism toward the company. The cynicism acts as a defence against the possibility that capitulation may collapse into collusion. Ironic cynicism protects against commitment to the company...and its further encroachment into their ability to make their own choices and self-determination (Casey, 1993: 175). Pragmatic capitulation gives the illusion that the individual is distancing themselves and this regulates their relationship with the company. Capitulated selves know how to maintain the image of themselves as playing the company game and they know when to retreat. They expend a lot of energy in differentiating themselves from defensive and colluded selves.

Reluctant capitulators are characteristically resigned, there is an inner conflict and they appear to be aware that they have traded off their self. They have more doubts than their pragmatic colleagues. Reluctant capitulation often occurs in employees who experience significant conflicts with competing commitments like children.

Casey's typology is extremely useful to my study and I have used it extensively in my analysis, however there are certain types of people who employ strategies that don't fit into any of her three broad clusters. As a result I have added another strategy typology called 'integrators' (De Wet, 2005).

- **Integrated Self**

An integrator is someone who acknowledges the attempts made by the company to colonise or socialise according to company values and culture, but also realises the necessity of maintaining his/her own values and culture. Integrators skilfully adopt enough of the company's values and cultures to satisfy the company but remain truthful to their own beliefs. This strategy combines both the individual's own culture with that of the organisation to make a hybrid culture that bridges the two and creates a 'best of both worlds' scenario for the manager adopting it. Integrators are mostly very senior individuals, often those who can influence culture and who may have a 'birds eye view' of the organisation and where it is headed.

## **Values**

Values, in addition to personality traits and social context, are the variables that affect the negotiation strategies of black African managers. According to Burgess (2002: 26), "values are enduring central dispositions, slow to change but not fixed...values refer to desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives". The questionnaire used in this study made use of a questionnaire prepared by the Social Identity and Organisation Research Group for a study that focussed on values and how they influence identity negotiation. Both my study and the SI-ORG study have used the same respondents and hence there is values data available for the respondents of my study. However, my study has focussed on social context as the dominant focus of this research. I do acknowledge the importance of values and personality in the decision-making process that individuals make when it comes to deciding on negotiation strategies. However in my study I have chosen to focus on social context as a primary factor that influences the negotiation of identity because there was some evidence in the data collected for the larger study that suggested that social context influenced the organisational culture of the two branches which in turn influenced the identity strategies adopted in the

aworkplace by the respondents. I decided to investigate these connections and the possibility that social context could be a major factor among other factors like values and personality that influence identity strategies in the workplace.

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## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The Central Research Question (CRQ) of this study is: To what extent do the different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence the organisational culture of the company in those places and how does this impact on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace?

I have divided the CRQ into three sub-questions in order to answer the CRQ:

- What is the social context in Cape Town and Johannesburg; and how/why is it or is it not influenced by race and racism?
- What is the corporate culture of The Company; and how/why is it affected by the social context?
- How does this impact on the ways in which black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace?

This study is a descriptive case study. It is an empirical study that uses both primary and existing data to address the research question sufficiently.

### **3.1 Methods of Collecting Data**

Each sub-question is answered by a section of this dissertation that was collected through various methods. This study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods although it is primarily a qualitative study. The study focuses on two branches in two different regions, namely Cape Town and Johannesburg, of a large multi-national organisation.

In order to answer the first sub-question I had to do a thorough review of the historical literature on Cape Town and Johannesburg, including a review of current periodicals and newspapers in order to create an informed argument as to how the social contexts of Cape Town and Johannesburg have come to be the way they are today.

The second sub-question also required a literature review but this time of The Company. Chapter 3 answers this sub-question by reviewing a forthcoming paper by

De Wet and Olivier on 'The "New Work Order" in Corporate South Africa – A Case Study of Dominant Discourses in One of South Africa's Largest Companies' followed by a description of how the social context of Cape Town and Johannesburg has affected The Company from the perspective of the respondents. This data was primarily sourced from the in-depth interviews that I will discuss in detail later in this chapter.

The third sub-question is where the majority of the work was required for this study. It involved sampling, the use of two different measuring instruments: one for a survey and one for the in-depth interviews. The data was then analysed using Statistica and Nvivo (the former a quantitative data analysis computer programme and the latter a qualitative data analysis computer programme).

### **3.2 Sampling**

The Social Identity and Organisation Research Group approached The Company with regard to doing a study on black African managers. Our corporate sponsor helped us get hold of a complete list of all middle and senior black African managers working at The Company in 2005. I then approached the heads of each Business Unit for their cooperation in the study. I emailed each potential respondent with a cover letter explaining the study and stating that I would be following up with a phone call to make an appointment with them. We (Dr De Wet and I) met with 28 middle, senior and executive managers in Cape Town and 15 Johannesburg managers. This amounted to 43 out of a total of 138 managers in the two offices. The number of respondents are fewer in Johannesburg because there was a limited time frame in which I could interview and collect data. The managers fit into five different business units within The Company. We chose these Business Units because of the larger number of black African managers in them. SI-ORG has now collected data from a total of 90 out of 138 managers, however I have only used the first 43 cases in my study and the my study focuses mostly on the 22 respondents who participated in the interviews.

### 3.2 Instruments

The instruments used in this study are SI-ORG's instruments that are being used for the larger study on black African managers.

I used two data collection instruments: a questionnaire survey and a semi-structured interview schedule. The questionnaire comprised of four sections. The first was a demographic section to gain a better understanding of where the individual comes from, what their qualifications were, how long they had been with the company, etc; the second section was a 21-point Values Survey created by Schwartz (Burgess, 2002) where respondents had to read 21 statements and to each statement decide whether this was very much like them or not at all like them on a six-point Likert scale. The third section is an unstructured (open-ended) self-description question and the fourth section was a set of structured questions, both of these sections were designed to ensure identity significant aggregations. The third and fourth sections to the questionnaire were designed, and tried and tested by De Wet (2000) See Appendix.

The Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) was developed by Schwartz, Lehmann and Roccas (Burgess, 2002). It has been tried and tested by Steven Burgess (2002) in South Africa and proven to be an appropriate cross-cultural instrument to measure values. The PVQ comprises short, textual portraits of 29 different people. Each portrait describes a person that holds certain goals, aspirations and wishes, and these are expressed in a single value type. The respondents are required to indicate how much or little they are like the person described in the portrait on a six-point Likert Scale (Burgess, 2002: 41). There are ten value types in the PVQ: Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity and Security.

The semi-structured interview schedule was developed by De Wet with the view to focussing on certain aspects of the manager's working life. There are six different sections that made up the interview schedule. The six themes were: personal values, organisational culture and its effects on individual values and priorities, the 'ideal manager' at The Company, specific challenges within the workplace and how these

challenges are managed, types of borders and boundaries that managers experience, and the generalisability of managers experiences.

### **3.4 Analysis**

I analysed the values data very basically in order to assess whether there were big differences between the values of the Cape Town and Johannesburg respondents. This was necessary because I have stated that there are three major influences on a respondent's choice of strategy. The first is values, the second is personality and the third is social context. In order to show that social context has a greater influence on the choice of strategy I needed to rule out any major differences in the values of the respondents in the two contexts that could be an extraneous variable and exert further influence on respondents. I was able to show this by plotting the total responses for each context of each question on a histogram and then comparing them.

I analysed the interview data using aspects of Miles and Huberman's method of analysing qualitative data. After each interview I recorded my thoughts in a journal. All interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed at a later stage. I read through each transcript before beginning the coding process in order to gain some idea of the types of codes that may come out. I used the Nvivo computer assisted data analysis programme to assist me in my analysis of the transcripts. I went through each transcript and coded according to the themes that came out of each interview. This is called first level coding where the codes describe the concept being discussed in the interview/journal, etc. Examples of these codes are "always on trial", "Being African = more challenges" and "lack of effective mentoring". Later on I then linked similar codes that showed evidence of patterns. This is called "Pattern Coding" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 102) or second level coding. Examples of second level coding were "Challenges caused by Organisational Culture", "Work Challenges" and "Managing Strategies". The codes use in the example above for first level coding ("always on trial", "Being African = more challenges" and "lack of effective mentoring") all fell in the "Challenges caused by Organisational Culture" second level code. Similarly all the codes that described challenges that resulted from work were grouped in the "Work Challenges" second level code and all codes that described strategies to manage challenges were grouped in the "Managing Challenges" second level code.

My second phase of analytical analysis of the interviews was to locate each respondent in a negotiating strategy according to Casey's (1995) categorisations (i.e. defensive, colluding, and capitulating) and De Wet's (2005) integration strategy. I analysed the interview data according to Miles and Huberman's (1994) method in order to separate out the evidence of managing strategies from the borders and then matched each respondent's responses with one of the four suggested strategies. To further ensure that I was indeed correct in my categorisation I went back to the interview and read through it to see if there were any factors that I may have left out or glossed over the first time.

Having analysed the data I was then able to write up in my findings chapter.

## **Chapter 4: The Social Contexts of Cape Town and Johannesburg**

If one were to put Cape Town and Johannesburg on a continuum measuring the extent to which each city has adopted New Capitalism, they would be at polar opposites of each other. Cape Town is widely considered to be a holiday destination. Tourists flock to the city every year to experience the sun, sea, and mountain in a relaxed atmosphere. Johannesburg is not considered to be a tourist destination. It is the centre of South Africa's economy and as a result the pace of life is vastly different to that of Cape Town's. John Matshikiza (2004: 482) contrasts these two cities: "If ever there was a town that was about making a deal, it is Johannesburg. Cape Town is known for its scenic beauty: the sea, the mountains, the ever-changing sky hovering over its naked history...it is Johannesburg, ugly, hectic Johannesburg, which draws the energies that make the rest of the country tick." In order to fully understand the dynamics of each of these cities and their respective social contexts it is important to look at their histories.

### **4.1 Cape Town: 'The Mother City' or Last Colonial Outpost?**

South Africa, as a Dutch colony first and then as a British colony, has had many varied and differing experiences during the colonial period. Cape Town was the entry point for colonialism and as a result has experienced it the longest however it was a different experience to that of the northern towns (Johannesburg, Kimberly and Pretoria) created through the discovery of gold and diamonds.

The economic and social history of the Western Cape and particularly Cape Town varies from that of the rest of the country because it is the only place in the country where slavery was experienced and more importantly, a post-emancipation period of paternalistic race relations (James & Simons, 1989: v). As a result of this the Western Cape developed a more stable and lasting system of class and labour relations that was closely linked to colour and status. (Bickford-Smith, 1989: 47).

Segregation has existed in the Cape since the middle of the nineteenth century. This became institutionally and socially entrenched from the late nineteenth century and became the precursor to the policies that were introduced in the middle of the twentieth century. The dominant class in Cape Town (the whites) were mainly concerned with the exclusionary aspect of segregation as social mobility of 'other than whites' threatened the dominant class belief that should coincide with racial order. By recognising 'other than whites' as equals it would destroy the assumption of racial superiority that was legitimising the dominant class position of the whites (Bickford-Smith, 1989: 49).

During the 1950's the government's coloured labour preference legislation formally recognised the already entrenched strategies of the white population in Cape Town. The purpose of the policy was to prevent movement of black Africans from the homelands into the Western Cape, to protect the participation of coloureds in the labour markets from competition by black Africans and, less explicitly, "to preserve the Western Cape region as one part of South Africa where whites would be numerically dominant" (Humphries, 1989: 169).

The movement of black Africans into the Western Cape was of great concern to whites and coloureds that considered the region to be traditionally a white and coloured settlement. The fear of black 'intruders in the region' prompted the authorities to propose and implement several policies in order to control the influx of black Africans into the region. (Humphries, 1989: 173).

The political unrest in the country during the 1970s and 1980's forced the hand of the government especially when the international community applied pressure to change their policies of apartheid. The end of influx control resulted in a flood of Africans into the Western Cape looking for a better life (particularly from the Eastern Cape). This alarmed the coloured community who until recently had not viewed black Africans as an enemy, however now they feared for their livelihoods as more and more black Africans moved into the Cape (Bickford-Smith, 1999: 225).

The 1990's saw major changes in political and social environments but for many, change wasn't happening quickly enough. The ANC's (African National Congress)

attempts to redress and transform the status quo was perceived as lowering standards by Whites and Coloureds, and not good enough by blacks. Racial and ethnic identities became increasingly polarised.

The demographics of Cape Town today still show the historical white and coloured majority, there are almost 2 million white and coloured inhabitants whereas there is only slightly more than 900 000 blacks in the city (2001 Census data, Statistics South Africa). It is the only region in South Africa where African blacks are in the minority. Steven Robins (2000: 411) has stated that the racialised divide between Cape Town's white and black inhabitants has remained firmly intact in the new South Africa. Jeremy Cronin (2006: 51) adds to this by saying that Cape Town is "not 'really African' like South Africa's other major cities".

The resentment towards blacks is still evident in the day to day dealings amongst the people of the city. Nkululeko Mabandla (2006:184) explains that there is "a frustrating intransigence about Cape Town towards transformation and attitude change - a maddening provinciality akin to backwardness or 'bumpkinism'. Comparatively speaking, Cape Town is probably last among the great cities of the world when it comes to integration. This is somewhat surprising when one takes into account that of all South African cities, Cape Town has been regarded as a bastion of liberalism." Mabandla (2006:184) goes on to say that "in a country of so many cultures like South Africa, there are still very few cross-cultural exchanges on any level, grass-roots or otherwise, in this city...".

## **4.2 Johannesburg: African Renaissance**

John Matshikiza calls Johannesburg the "Instant City" because before the gold rush there was no historical record of it (Matshikiza, 2004: 481). Johannesburg began as a mining camp during the late nineteenth century. By the 1930's Johannesburg was a mix of all sorts of immigrants attracted by the gold. Despite the attempts of the settlers to create a European city out of Johannesburg, it has become a 'central site for the entanglement of the modern and the African – the African modern' (Mbembe,



2004: 376). Johannesburg became the first site on the continent where capital, labour and industry came together (Mbembe, 2004: 376).

The gold mines attracted men from all over southern Africa who sought a better life for themselves and wealth to take back to their families. However what they found was a life where they had little choice but to sell their labour cheaply for a meagre wage and no rights. In Nelson Mandela's autobiography he describes Johannesburg as he first saw it in the 1940's: "Johannesburg had always been depicted as a city of dreams, a place where one could transform oneself from a poor peasant into a wealthy sophisticate, a city of danger and of opportunity." (Mandela, 1994: 69) He soon comes to understand the real nature of life in Johannesburg for a black man when he sought work on the mines: "There is nothing magical about a gold mine...Everywhere I looked I saw black men in dusty overalls looking tired and bent." (Mandela, 1994: 73).

Johannesburg grew through the forces and relations of production. Black life was considered to be a commodity form; it was needed and valued for its industrial utility (Mbembe, 2004: 380). A deep racism emerged out of this system and it functioned as a way of maintaining biological differences between and among persons. Black bodies were essential to the functioning of the mines but were also expendable when it had been used up and worked too hard (Mbembe, 2004: 380).

In order to maintain the superiority that the White settlers had claimed, they needed to enforce the racial stereotypes of the native being lazy, excessive, naturally doomed to self destruction and the men as sexual predators that White women needed to be protected from (Mbembe, 2004: 381). "The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Act Amendment Act (1950) were two of the earliest apartheid measures designed to preserve the imagined racial purity of the White group" (Mbembe, 2004: 384). These and many other apartheid laws allowed the White government to order Johannesburg geographically and socially along racial lines. "Johannesburg's architecture and city planning manifested an instrumental rationality that combined a pastoral urban imaginary for white citizens with a militarization of space for blacks" (Mbembe, 2004: 385).

During apartheid, Johannesburg was the thumping centre of resistance and change (Matshikiza, 2004: 484-5). Freedom fighters were drawn to the city to help the struggle cause, they would eventually be forced to flee into exile or were imprisoned but the city remained a major part of their existence, wherever they were.

Since the end of apartheid, Johannesburg has gradually – and with ever increasing momentum – become a multi-cultural, non-racial cosmopolitan city where white and blacks work together, socialise, and mix in relative harmony. There are still the townships that continue to grow on the outskirts of the major industrial areas, but the middle to upper class areas are not exclusively white anymore. For the first time in South Africa's history, the black-middle class is larger than the white middle class in Johannesburg (Nuttall, 2004: 731). In Johannesburg black Africans are in the majority, there are over 2 million black Africans whereas there are only 515 000 whites. Sarah Nuttall (2004(2): 431) suggests that Johannesburg has served as a critical site for the remixing and reassembling of racial identities. She goes on to say that "racial identities...are new in relation to the apartheid classification of people as white, black, Indian or Coloured" (Nuttall, 2004 (2): 436).

Johannesburg is now experiencing its own re-incarnation. Township culture has become the latest 'hip' fashion. Kwaito music has permeated the white radio stations and has become one of South Africa's latest identity symbols, clothing marketed with township labels is considered 'cool' by the young black generation who are spending their time in places like the Zone in Rosebank – one of the previously white areas. Racial identities are being replaced with class identities where race is no longer as important. "Class dynamics work into the constitution of racialised taste patterns, as music and clothing take on charged race and class connotations. What is clear is that new youth cultures are superseding the resistance politics of an earlier generation, while still jamming, remixing and remaking cultural codes and signifiers from the past." (Nuttall, 2004(2): 436).

The well-known kwaito artist Zola commented on Johannesburg's transformation:

*“...Jo’burg is now a place of pride, a place of history, a place of liberation, it’s a place of African wealth, technology, education and culture.” (Nuttal, 2004(2): 443).*

Achille Mbembe has commented similarly:

*“Despite all appearances to the contrary, the fabric of the racial city is in the process of being destroyed. Only its vestiges and debris remain. Blacks and whites have become wanderers among its ruins. But the play of intervals enables everyone to construct his or her own story of Johannesburg and form memories of place.”*  
(Mbembe, 2004: 404).

Cape Town and Johannesburg are two very different cities. Each has a different history and has experienced post-apartheid South Africa in a different way. Johannesburg is the power house of South Africa. The constant physical and economic changes force or facilitate the social and political change that is happening in the city. Racially, Johannesburg is traditionally a black area and from its inception as a mining town, the city has attracted and relied on migrants who we can credit as having built the city. Cape Town still harbours the remnants of a British colony. The population has until recently been predominantly White and Coloured (1,9 million people – Labour Force Survey 2001), not Black (900 000 people – Labour Force Survey 2001). However this has changed with the massive migration of Africans from the Eastern Cape. There are longstanding feelings of threat and resentment towards Black people from both Coloureds and Whites that stems back to the time when Cape Town was considered to be the last white stronghold in the country and the coloured labour preference policy was widely supported by both Coloureds and Whites. Except for the beginnings of a burgeoning black middle class (although nowhere near as significant as in Johannesburg) Cape Town is still largely as polarised as it was during apartheid; there has been none of the integration of culture with the townships as has been evident in Johannesburg.

## **Chapter 5. The Company in Context**

This dissertation focuses on the affects of social context on organisations and the people working in them. Therefore it is important to understand the different social contexts in which the two branches that I have studied are placed as well as the current organisational culture that is being encouraged (implemented) within The Company. The organisational culture dictates the ways things are done within The Company however the social context also plays an important role in the way employees experience their working lives. This chapter will discuss the dominant features of The Company culture with particular attention to the influences of New Capitalism and the effects of the transition from an Old Way of doing things to a New Way or New Capitalist way of doing things. The first part of this chapter draws heavily from a forthcoming paper by De Wet, J and Olivier, J titled *The “New Work Order” in Corporate South Africa – A Case Study of Dominant Discourses in One of South Africa’s Largest Companies*. The second part of this chapter will address the different social contexts that exist in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and the effects that these differences have on the way people work.

### **5.1 The Company in Transition**

#### **5.1.1 Description of ‘The Company’<sup>1</sup>**

The Company is one of the largest and most influential companies in South Africa. It was established in the late 1800’s in the Cape Colony where it was a small local organisation, and has developed into a global, technologically advanced mega-corporation with thousands of culturally diverse employees based all over South Africa and abroad (De Wet & Olivier, 2006: 2).

The Company has often been called an “English” company because of its roots in colonial Cape Town and its links with England, however not long after its inception it incorporated an Afrikaans element in order to project a dual identity. Historically The

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<sup>1</sup> In order to protect the identity of the respondents who participated in the study, all references alluding to the name or identity of the company have been removed.

Company has employed a combination of English and Afrikaans-speaking people, and has also attracted clients from both these communities. However, The Company's top management has remained overwhelmingly white English-speaking men. "In 2005 85% of the national and international executive management structures together were white English-speaking men – the remaining 15% were black men" (De Wet, & Olivier, 2006: 3). One of the most senior black African managers at The Company confirmed this dominant English culture by saying that the majority of successful senior managers in The Company "have that English bit of culture...you know, English people always downplay themselves; they're vicious as anything but they always downplay it. The Company men downplay things, they don't go around saying 'I'm the best at this'" (Source file: Mbulelo, Case 43) (De Wet, & Olivier, 2006: 3).

The 1980's saw South Africa going through a time of political unrest. The Company started showing greater interest in expanding overseas and soon after the change of the political regime in South Africa, The Company changed from being a member-owned company into a shareholder-owned company. This allowed the company's shares to be traded on the stock market thus improving access to investment capital (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 3). The head office of The Company moved overseas and was listed on that country's stock exchange. This marked a significant change for the company. It was no longer a locally focussed company but a global mega-corporation answerable to overseas shareholders (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 3).

As South Africa moved into its new democracy so the local company identity shifted to being "proudly South African". This discourse of "South African roots" is consistent throughout the company's documentation – both as part of its heritage, and as part of its modern strategy. "The Company is currently a weave of what it has been in the past, what it is at present, and what it imagines itself to be – of a new global order in local specificity." (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 3).

The recent appointment of a new Managing Director (MD) for the local South African operation has brought about significant change. The outgoing MD was brought in to effect cultural change on the organisation and this was a major focus of his term of office. The new MD is seen to have stronger ties with the overseas head office, and

the company culture is being portrayed as more globally focussed. The transfer of a number of key business departments and senior staff from the historical headquarters in Cape Town to Johannesburg, has been seen as a 'fast-track' to make the company more productive and is significant in that it is leaving the more 'laid-back' culture of Cape Town for the more driven, work-oriented culture of Johannesburg (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 4).

### **5.1.2 The Emerging New Work Order/New Capitalism in 'The Company'**

"The Company is aware that some employees are caught between paradigms of "Old Economy" and "New Economy"" (Interview, Transformation Manager, 2005 in De Wet, J & Olivier, J., forthcoming: 4). One of the senior black African managers also commented on this when he categorised elements in The Company as "Old World" and "New World" (Source File: David, Case 16). "He interpreted the Old World as everything that represents the old conservative company, and the Old South Africa, with which he could not associate himself, and the New World that represents everything modern, progressive and New South Africa, of which he was a part" (Source File: David, Case 16) (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 4). In reality they co-exist and are part of the whole. Gee et al (1996: 86) point out that, "As always, (in the New Work Order), a new Discourse arises in dynamic and complex interaction with older discourses and other identities" – this certainly seems apparent at The Company (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 4).

Gee et al (1996: xii-xiii) speak of the technological advances which have produced this New Capitalism – the new methods of business management and the New Work Order. The Company is a technologically advanced mega-corporate that is competing on a global level; hence it can be seen as a New Capitalist organisation. I will discuss some of these elements in more detail.

- **Sociotechnical Engineering**

"One of the primary elements that identify this organisation as a New Capitalist enterprise is the importance it places on Sociotechnical engineering" (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 5).

*Constant innovation, lean and mean efficiency, acceptance of high risk, and the meeting of intense customer demands create a need for smart and fully committed employees, each and every one of whom has to add value at every moment to the enterprise...the need for intense loyalty and commitment under such stressful conditions leads to the focus on enculturation, communities of practice, core values, and visionary leadership (Gee et al. 1996: 157).*

In order to gain this sort of high level commitment from employees, companies can use two methods: “one is new-style visionary leadership and the other is the creation of core values as part and parcel of a business’s core culture, the internalisation of which ensures that everyone will work in the best interests of the organisation as a whole” (Gee et al. 1996: 32). The Company has attempted to implement this and where in theory it fits neatly into the New Capitalist paradigm both in its use of leadership and in the creation of core values, in practice the reality is somewhat different. The different geo-social contexts display varying levels of New Capitalist adoption.

The Company standard is the four core values (pushing beyond boundaries, integrity, accountability and respect) that govern everything they do. You can see these values advertised on posters on the walls in the offices, it is emblazoned on the company website and almost every respondent mentioned them when asked about the values that they rate highly in their lives.

- **Global Company and locally Proudly South African**

The Company’s ‘cultural management’ has its own internal tensions when it comes to the organisational culture of The Company as a global concern, managed from the head office overseas; and The Company as a Proudly South African local entity that has its roots in Africa. This tension is consistent with New Capitalism as Gee et al (1996: 157) note that global mega-corporations still manifest themselves as local operations.

“The Company, therefore, maintains a strong discourse of South Africa, whether it is a real sense of loyalty to its place of birth, or the protective clothing of a mega-corporation is uncertain. The symbols and themes of the new South Africa are, nevertheless, powerful motivators in themselves, and certainly might be useful in forging commitment to the organisational culture” (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 7).

- **Dismantling of Rigid Old-style Hierarchies**

“Another sign of New Capitalism is the dismantling of old-style management hierarchies, and a new focus on teams and units” (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 9). In (the new work order), rigid hierarchies will be dismantled, as will the ceremonial trappings of power...more importantly, the goal will be to attach people mentally and emotionally to the workplace – to make them feel intimately connected to the corporation even if in reality that connection is transitory” (Gee et al. 1996: 60).

The Company is in the process of removing the middle management level that is standing in the way of a flatter hierarchy focussed more on teams, and it is also striving for a co-accountable business where everyone is responsible for actions and for fixing problems. However the dismantling of hierarchies is a slow process and has not yet succeeded in its aim, as one of the respondents of this study highlighted: “Everything operates on a top down basis. I’m not sure if there’s a bottom up process whereby management feeds back to the company” (Source File: Peter, Case 29) (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 9).

- **Co-existence of Change and Team-family**

Gee et al (1996: 28) note that in the New Work Order, perfection becomes standard, and change becomes the norm. One of the very senior managers in the study commented on this: “...Our environment is constantly changing; and we’re dealing with huge fundamental issues which on the one side makes the workplace right now, really difficult... On the other side it makes it more exciting because things are



happening. Real things are happening.” (Source File: Mbulelo, Case 43) (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 9).

Casey (1995: 94) points out that the company culture is underpinned by its foundational myth. The Company’s foundational myth is built on the idea that the organisation exists for “the mutual benefit of its members”, however the changes that have occurred as a result of New Capitalism has dramatically changed this emphasis and according to the transformation manager there is a perception amongst staff that The Company values the share price more than the employees and as a result the psychological contract with the employees has been broken (De Wet & Olivier, forthcoming: 14).

- **Empowerment is encouraged and denied at the same time**

The employee in the New Capitalist organisation is newly empowered and encouraged to take real control of their work. There must be a wider distribution of knowledge, and everyone must be “in the know” (Gee et al. 1996: 34). However this expectation is often far from reality. Employees are not given the space to frame the goals of the organisation or to generate a more powerful role for themselves in the decision-making processes. “Real empowerment is encouraged and denied at the same time – it is ultimately about profit” (Gee et al. 1996: xvi). Several of the respondents commented on this in their interviews:

“To some extent they try to be inclusive or appear to be inclusive but not really because often they’ve already made their own decisions and they’re just consulting everybody because that’s what’s expected but you know that’s, they’ve ultimately already made their decision.” (Source File: Tembi, Case 33).

Gee et al (1996: 165) call New Capitalism “a new discourse in the making” and any organisation seeking to engage with New Capitalism is going to become a site of change and transformation driven by specific factors including local and global ones (De Wet, & Olivier, forthcoming: 17). The Company is in a transition from what it used to be to what it would like to be and what it is now is an amalgamation of the two – a combination that doesn’t make for a comfortable partnership.

## 5.2 The Impact of Social Context on 'The Company' Culture

- 'Race' and Racism

The rate of transformation and the existence or non-existence of 'race' and racism in public perception of their every day lives is one of the major differences between Cape Town and Johannesburg.

*"There is no real commitment to transform the organisation and ensure that transformation is inclusive of the community. It's even worse in the Western Cape. The Western Cape is very anti-black."* (Source File: Xola, Case 23, Cape Town manager)

Xola is talking about the general perception that black Africans have of the state of transformation in the Western Cape and how this transfers into the corridors of organisations. Two years ago there was a much published incident of racism at the Cape Town branch and it made it into the local and national press. This caused a lot of damage to the company's image and particularly to management who were seen not to be reacting appropriately to the incident. This had repercussions for all managers in the company, including the managers in the Johannesburg branch.

*"We've got these tensions primarily in the Western Cape part of the company,... we've just come out of a very serious situation last year (the racial case)...Nobody's bothered to actually sit down and find out from black managers... and white managers ...and asked how do you, as a black manager, how do you as a white manager respond to this kind of thing? How do you feel about what has happened, it's a reflection on the company; it's a reflection on how managers, have implemented a company policy how does this make you feel?"* (Source File: Xola, Case 23, Cape Town manager)

The repercussions of this incident are still being felt fairly strongly in the Cape Town branch. Employees feel it wasn't adequately addressed with them and this has left some managers feeling that it wasn't resolved.

The Johannesburg office was affected by the incident but the reaction to it was different. Naturally there was a perception of distance from the incident and geographically this is obvious however, there is also a perception of a distance in attitudes, "it wouldn't have happened in this part of the business, because we aren't like that".

*"You see those negative sentiments come through and I think as far as the media is concerned there's been a lot of damage from the media and from ex employees moving out of here going into other corporates and speaking about this issue, they taint the image of The Company, ... some clients ask me about it and even bring a newspaper article on the issue pertaining to Cape Town to a meeting and sometimes I just have to say that in Jo'burg we have a different environment."* (Source File: Julius, Case 32, Johannesburg manager)

There is a strong perception that the social and work environment in Cape Town and Johannesburg is very different. Several of the Johannesburg managers had spent some time in Cape Town at the head office and they recounted how different their experiences were.

*"I just relocated from Cape Town to Johannesburg so that in itself is also a challenge in terms of, its a different environment, for sure I think people are more driven here but that comes with maybe a bit more of a cut throat type mentality as well to some extent. Because everybody wants to be at the top... I think I experience a bit more work culture here in Johannesburg than I did in Cape Town in that everybody you know adheres to working hard and being consistent"* (Source File: Tembi, Case 33, Johannesburg manager recently relocated from Cape Town)

Race is much less of an issue in Johannesburg where people of all races mix far easier than they do in Cape Town. The focus on work and putting the business first helps in this regard. Everybody is focussed on their performance and how can they better their position.

*“Jo’burg is a different animal. Jo’burg is very dynamic, cosmopolitan; people don’t have racial or race issues you know its all about work and performance, it’s very different from Cape Town. I worked in Cape Town for about five years so I can safely compare between the two...being black isn’t a challenge in Jo’burg, definitely not”.*

(Source File: Themba, Case 34, Johannesburg manager)

One of the senior managers in the Johannesburg branch is on an executive committee for one of the business units that is managed from Cape Town. She spends a lot of her time commuting between Cape Town and Johannesburg. The problem with her situation is that she feels unwelcome when she arrives in Cape Town. She feels there is a heightened sense of race and this impacts on the way that people interact with her despite her senior level within the business.

*“In Jo’burg I’ve got lots of white friends and for us I tell you there is just no colour, when I get to Cape Town people don’t know how to deal with you and it sort of scares me at times, how do they feel about me, what do they think about me; its like you’re just this person that they don’t want to touch or get closer to or they’re scared... I don’t find them being open like human beings you know.”* (Source File: Thandile, Case 40, Johannesburg manager)

This manager is regularly crossing the race borders that are apparent in Cape Town but not in Johannesburg. She feels she is moving between two different worlds that are meant to be the same but the different locations appear to be worlds apart when it comes to their views and attitudes towards race. She feels that she is not taken seriously because she is black.

The Company executive management has realised the differences between the Cape Town and Johannesburg branches and has undertaken to move most of its core departments up to Johannesburg.

Productivity is paramount for The Company. The Company’s focus is about ‘getting the business right’, which is the main focus of the Johannesburg business however in Cape Town there is concern that this is at the expense of the employees. The proposed

move to Johannesburg is causing some issues for the employees and managers in Cape Town as one of the senior manager's describes below:

*"...the one question that was important for me was, okay, you are moving us to Jo'burg because Johannesburg is alive, is vibrant, business is being done differently. Cape Town is laid back, it takes a long time to see results. The Johannesburg head office or whatever it's going to be will be a success because of the people who drive it. You are taking a whole bunch of Capetonians to go and work in this environment. How have you prepared them, how are you going to prepare those people to be fast tracked, [clicks fingers] to be fast living, to deliver, to do things the way Jo'burg people do?"* (Source File: Shelley, Case 27, Cape Town manager)

However, as it stands, the South African head office is in Cape Town and this causes great annoyance and hindrance to the Johannesburg staff who expect things to work quicker than they do.

*"...then the Jo'burg Cape Town thing makes things worse for us because, you know, you put something together and you send it through for approval and then somebody questions it, and then somebody puts it into their in-box and then you just don't get a decision. As soon as I need approval for whatever [from Cape Town], then that's where the problem starts."* (Source File: Sam, Case 41, Johannesburg manager)

Several of the Johannesburg managers highlighted the fact that having the decision-making centre in Cape Town caused major issues in their lives. It restricted their ability to service their clients efficiently when they had to wait for responses from Cape Town.

The employees at The Company that were interviewed in this study made it very clear that there is a difference between how things are done in Cape Town and how things are done in Johannesburg. The following two chapters will investigate to what extent these differences are as a result of the different social contexts in which they are working and whether the hypothesis that 'race' and 'laid-backness' are major influences on these differences is in fact the case.

## **Chapter 6. Findings**

As I have mentioned already, the focus is on the influences that social context outside the workplace has on corporate culture in South African organisations and how this affects the negotiation of identity in black African managers. Chapters 4 and 5 have outlined the different social contexts of Cape Town and Johannesburg, and the corporate culture at The Company as well as the influences of the social context on the corporate culture at The Company. This section will highlight the findings with regard to the effect that the corporate culture, influenced by the social context has on how black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace.

There are three major components that make up identity: values, personality traits and demographic characteristics. The major findings of my study focuses on the effect that race and 'laid-backness' has on the way black African managers experience the corporate world. Race is an important demographic characteristic. It has been and still is a major issue in parts of South Africa. However it is important that I don't ignore the other components of identity. I have not spent much time on personality traits although the findings do suggest that personality has an affect on the strategies that managers adopt when negotiating identity in the workplace. On close inspection of the values survey and the value priorities expressed by managers (although a chi square test may have been a more definitive indicator), it is clear that the values of Cape Town and Johannesburg managers are not distinguishable. Almost all respondents indicated that family, South Africans, Christians and working colleagues/professionals were important in the way they described the factors that made up their identity. Analysis of the values survey revealed that all respondents embrace an openness to change. This is a key factor in New Capitalism. Many of the respondents value self-transcendence over conservation and self-enhancement, which suggests that most black African managers favour a more humane form of Capitalism.

## **6.1 Borders: A comparison between Cape Town and Johannesburg**

The findings of this study will be presented as a comparison of the borders that managers in Cape Town and Johannesburg experience and then how their different managing strategies compare. The major distinguishing factor between Cape Town and Johannesburg is the existence or non-existence of race issues and a laid-back culture. These two factors are the themes that I will discuss in this chapter.

### **Cape Town: Being African = Race Challenges**

Issues of race were clearly prevalent in the Cape Town office. 75% of all the Cape Town respondents interviewed mentioned that race is an issue that they deal with on a day to day basis in the workplace. Only 57% of Johannesburg respondents mentioned race, but only 14% of them highlighted it as something that had a serious affect on them in the workplace. Being discriminated according to your race group is a major border because there is little that a manager can do about his or her race, and it has no bearing on whether they are able to do their job or not. It creates a situation where managers do not feel that they belong and are forced to prove their ability.

- **Border: A Lack of Effective Mentoring from White Managers**

The mentoring relationship between managers and their superiors is one area where race differences causes problems.

*“You’re always the one coming into the company with almost no skill there, and you have to start from scratch... if somebody who was white joined the company with you, there was a mentor for that person, they get taken out to coffee, they get more information, they always know ahead what is happening before you do.”* (Source File: Shelley, Case 27, Cape Town manager)

The Cape Town respondents all felt that mentoring for black managers was hugely ineffective and blamed this on the fact that white managers aren’t comfortable with

blacks. This didn't come up as a wide spread issue in Johannesburg but it was mentioned by one of the respondents in the Johannesburg branch.

*"...you have white managers recruiting other white people, and they get along very well because they are culturally similar, they've got so many things in common, they can identify with each other so it becomes almost like second nature to bring them into the organisation. Whereas when you bring in black people and they're mentored or managed by white people it becomes a problem."* (Source File: Wilson, Case 36, Johannesburg manager)

For many senior white managers who have worked at The Company for a long time it is very difficult for them to relate to the new black managers that they are meant to be assisting. As the quote above alludes, many of the respondents felt that there is a lack of willingness to understand black managers, to try to relate to them. There is a general perception amongst both white and black employees that white mentors relate better to white managers. This is because of the similar cultural background that they share and as a result they get more support and are given more information and attention than black managers.

- **Border: Being Black = More Challenges**

All the Cape Town respondents agreed that as a black African they encountered more challenges in the work place than their other colleagues. This sentiment was shared by five of the Johannesburg respondents but not with the same levels of frustration as those in Cape Town:

*"Ja, ja. Being black is an issue, of course it's an issue; you stand out; if you are a black man, you are young, so if you are different therefore there's a special treatment that you receive, both positive and negative..."* (Source File: Mbulelo, Case 43, Cape Town manager)

Some of the respondents felt that there is a perception amongst some of the white staff that black African's have baggage from the apartheid struggle:



*"... rumour has it that a statement was made that you shouldn't hire black South Africans because they've got a lot of baggage... black people who are very radical with their political views do not necessarily make it."* (Source File: David, Case 16, Cape Town manager)

There is also the perception that whites are careful about what they say to blacks because they may become a senior manager in the future and so you shouldn't upset them:

*"People are very careful about what they say to a black person because this could be their next boss"* (Source File; David, Case 16, Cape Town manager)

As a black African you have to be careful not to be too outspoken about race issues because you can easily be perceived as a spokesman for black issues:

*"...you simply can't afford to be the key speaker on black issues, on race issues, because then you become the 'black on the board', you know, the Bantu affairs representative..."* (David, Case 16, Cape Town manager)

Thozama explains that in his view overt racism under apartheid was easier to deal with than the subtle forms it now takes as covert racism:

*"You know...things were done during apartheid times that were not nice. But I always believe that those who were being discriminated against during apartheid were the lucky ones because at that time if a person hates you, he'll say 'I hate you because you're black'. That's fine, it was easy. But these days, I tell you, it's done in such a way that it's very difficult to pin-point...because he will try to shield it."* (Source File: Thozama, Case 26, Cape Town manager)

There is a perception that as a black manager you are always being watched:

*"Do you know the feeling of being watched all the time, its incredible?! ...And I'm a very private person. You feel at times under huge pressure and it's ... a sense of people own you; they feel they own you...You meet a black audience, they tell you that, you know, you're the hope of this organisation, you are the hope of the country, you are the hope."* (Source File: Mbulelo, Case 43, Cape Town manager)

For the black population black African manager's are a sign of hope at having got so far within a major South African organisation, for the white population they are both a threat and a symbol of the direction that the country is going in so everything they do is taken note of.

- **Border: 'Old Boy' Network**

In the Cape Town office there is a well established "Old Boy" network where senior managers support those that are essentially like them. Predominantly white-male-dominated this "Old Boy" network encourages and facilitates the upward mobility of certain employees and not others. Typically those who are supported by this network are white males who have a similar cultural background. They socialise together and it is a very tight clique that is difficult to break into. This is an example of a racialised white male network. The "Old Boy" network is less prevalent in the Johannesburg office but one of the respondents did mention the difficulty he has with meeting the informal requirements of an aspiring manager, where golf culture is particularly important:

*"...there's a golf culture in this organisation, you've got to play golf, and if you don't play golf then you've got a problem because that's how we network around here."* (Source File: Wilson, Case 36, Johannesburg manager)

For black African managers it is particularly difficult to break into this network because for the most part they don't fit any of the criteria and this creates an almost impenetrable border in their career mobility.

*"...the old boys' network is still strong ...we are living in an environment where society has this spotlight on The Company... but it has not dislodged the old boys' network. There's no question about the attitude to keep people out..."* (Source File: David, Case 16, Cape Town manager)

Race issues pervaded much of the interview data of the Cape Town respondents. It was obvious that their working lives are regularly disturbed by issues around race and racism. This border hits at the heart of a person's identity. As I mentioned earlier

demographic characteristics are an important factor that makes up a person's identity. When you are discriminated against because of this it can lead to a sense of not feeling like you belong and this creates psycho-social borders.

## **Johannesburg: Pressure to Perform**

The findings for the Johannesburg office are very different to the Cape Town findings. The borders experienced by black African managers in Johannesburg are predominantly around the business expectations of the organisation. Race is a much smaller issue in Johannesburg and it appears that it takes a different, less discriminatory form in the Johannesburg office than in Cape Town. Because race is so much less of an issue, gender issues (that exist in almost all organisations) are more visible.

*"...Jo'burg is a different animal. Jo'burg is very dynamic, cosmopolitan, people don't have racial or race issues, it's all about work and performance, it's very different from CT."*

(Themba, Case 34, Johannesburg manager)

The majority of the Johannesburg respondents dismissed race as not being a major issue in their working environment. 6/14 said that race has no impact on their working lives, 2/14 mentioned that it had had a significant impact on their lives, 6/14 mentioned it but accepted it as part of working for white people. It is seen as a problem that has been overcome and for many of the managers, if there are still racist feelings it is felt that it is the problem of the person who is feeling those racist feelings and they need to deal with them appropriately.

- **Border: Client Expectations**

Despite the fact that the Johannesburg office is far more progressive and non-racial than the Cape Town office, the company is still going through a transition period and this is going to affect all parts of the company. Race issues arise largely when dealing with clients:

*“Um what you do find is that when we deal with black on black clients either in the parastatals or state owned enterprises is that you still have to demonstrate that you’re not an affirmative action type appointment. (You have to) prove yourself; you still have to demonstrate yourself, more so than your white colleagues. I don’t know if you are aware of this but I have a perception that it is far easier to sell to a black person if you are a white person than it is from a black person to another black person. As I said it’s an issue of do you know what you’re talking about?”* (Source File: Thambo, Case 31, Johannesburg manager)

There is the perception that clients require the black African managers to prove that they are capable and can do their job as well as the white people who did it previously. There are increasing numbers of black clients being serviced and interestingly they are particularly concerned that the black African managers handling their affairs are capable and can do it as well as a white manager. One respondent explained that black people have been conditioned to believe that white people always tell the truth, are cleverer and more educated than blacks. In order to counter this perception, the black African manager has to prove that they are worthy of the business and can do the job as well as any white.

*“...you are afraid to step in the wrong direction and then at the end, being accused of failing and...letting your black brothers down because of certain expectations...”* (Source File: Julius, Case 32, Johannesburg manager)

The other side of the expectations of black clients is that they are seen as a hope for the future, an example to other blacks that it is possible to get to this level in business as a black person. This places pressure on black managers not to fail as they feel that they would be letting their ‘black brothers down’.

- **Border: Cape Town is more racialised**

The different attitudes towards race in Cape Town and Johannesburg are especially felt by those managers who commute to Cape Town to attend meetings.

*“When I get to Cape Town...people don’t know how to deal with you and it sort of scares me at times, how do they feel about me, what do they think about me and you know they can tap into their minds because its like you’re just this person that they don’t want to touch or get*

*closer to or they're scared. I don't find them being open like human beings you know. (In Johannesburg) it just doesn't matter, I have got lots of white friends, they phone me, we go for dinner, I go to their houses, they come to my house, my son is in a multiracial school I mean every time he's in the house, actually he doesn't have a lot of black friends, he's got a lot of white friends, whenever he's in my house its almost like most of his friends are white, more than black... but when I get to CT its sort of, it takes me back a bit"* (Source File: Thandile, Case 40, Johannesburg manager)

There is a definite feeling that race is a problem in Cape Town and that black African managers are treated differently in Cape Town. One of the Johannesburg respondents reflected that the disjuncture between black and white hasn't been adequately addressed in Cape Town. Whites aren't used to dealing with black superiors and this cause's internal conflict for them, whereas blacks have had to deal with whites in superior positions for a long time and are more used to it.

New Capitalism is reliant on developing newer and more perfected and customised goods and services to niche markets, and this relies on knowledge and flexible learning of workers who are committed partners in the process. In the Johannesburg context black African managers are essential to this process because they are representatives of a culture/race group not previously serviced adequately. The Company has recognised this niche and has positioned its black African managers as the gatekeepers or custodians of this section of the business.

## **Pressures of Old Capitalism and the slow transition to New Capitalism in Cape Town**

Issues of race and laid-backness are both elements of the 'Old World' at The Company. New Capitalism embodies the fast-paced, business oriented environment that Johannesburg has largely adopted and that Cape Town is slowly inching itself towards.

- **Border: 'laid-back' attitude of Cape Town**

The 'laid-backness' of Cape Town was highlighted by several managers:

*“Johannesburg is alive, is vibrant – business is being done differently – Cape Town is laid back, it takes a long time to see results...”* (Source File: Shelley, Case 27, Cape Town manager)

However the theme became more pronounced through the input of the Johannesburg managers who complained that Cape Town slows things down when it comes to getting things done:

*“I would get rid of some of the old things. We’ve got our admin department in Cape Town, for me that doesn’t make any sense because if I need something done, I need it done!”* (Source File: Tessa, Case 42, Johannesburg manager)

Apart from issues of race and laid-backness there are other aspects of the Old World or Old Capitalism that is holding Cape Town back and creates challenges for young, up-and-coming black African managers who are attracted to the fast-paced New Capitalist working environment.

- **Border: Remnants of Old Capitalism**

In Old Capitalism, managers are expected to tow the line, express opinions only when asked and are not encouraged to express differing opinions to those of the company. Managers have minimal responsibility for anything more than following the company lead and are rewarded for making sure that everything runs smoothly without complication.

*“...the fact that I can’t speak my mind is frustrating. For me that’s the single biggest frustrating thing: that your point of view, no matter how strong and how you feel about it, has got always got to be checked quite seriously. And therefore you are blocked from actually addressing contentious issues directly. And that’s very frustrating...There’s serious consequences if you say what you think all the time, there are very, very serious consequences. You upset people, whether you are speaking the truth or not is not material, you know...my experience is that in the corporate world people label you, and if you do not have authority you get sidelined in a very subtle but very effective way.”* (Source File: David, Case 16, Cape Town manager)

Those who challenge the company line or superiors are frowned upon and there are serious implications for this sort of behaviour. Their prospects of promotion are often damaged and they are branded as trouble-makers. This holds them back and forces them to become timid and obedient managers who are too scared to challenge the status quo for fear of being branded and punished. For black African managers this border often requires them to compromise on their own values and beliefs in order to succeed in their job causing personal and psychological discomfort.

## **Conforming to New Capitalism in Johannesburg**

The borders that challenge black African managers in Johannesburg largely revolve around the challenges of conforming to New Capitalism. There are still remnants of the Old World, specifically race, but the 'laid-back' attitude is not something that is found in Johannesburg and managers only encounter this when they communicate with the Cape Town branch.

- **Border: Pressures of New Capitalism**

The pressures to conform to a New Capitalist environment create borders centring on providing the best service to clients, ensuring transformation succeeds and works for the organisation, and the requirements of the business to ensure competitive advantage. Black African managers are feeling this pressure to perform at the top of their game. It is a pressure that all employees are experiencing although cultural and historical differences do play a role in these pressures. Black African managers are still required to prove that they are aligned with the business principles that The Company advocates for their success.

*"...I do feel that there are expectations. I do feel that the expectations align very much with what the company feels it needs to be doing for itself in terms of its transformation ... there's a sense of being put out there in terms of the company saying 'yes, can you see we are actually transforming' ... I'm black and its an issue ... I'm always feeling that there's pressure on my part to ensure that I am actually delivering and not just delivering on a standard basis but you know, excelling in what I do because I think just good enough is not good enough..."*  
(Source File: Tembi, Case 33, Johannesburg manager)

The pressure to 'prove your alignment' is perceived as a pressure to perform beyond the norm set by others (non-black) in the organisation. The perception is that you are never in a position where you are not proving your alignment with the organisations' requirements. It creates a feeling of always being on trial.

There is huge pressure to become the kind of manager that the organisation 'breeds', these kinds of managers are hugely results driven. Often this does not fit with the personality or individual goals of the manager and can become frustrating borders as the quote below describes:

*"I guess what I am trying to say is the kind of managers that we as an organisation are producing ... are there for results only... I don't want to be the kind of person that this organisation breeds."* (Source File: Wilson, Case 36, Johannesburg manager)

The competing needs of the individual and the organisation can conflict around areas like behaviour and personal interactions. For example the organisation requires employees to adopt a predominantly Western manner when dealing with colleagues and clients.

*"For whites it is easy to move from the home world to the work world. For blacks you grow up in a location setup (township), suddenly you're going to a Model C school where the values are different (e.g. sports, music lessons, etc) in location schools you just have to pass matric. At work you are taught telephone skills, you have to smile, interact on a friendship basis as well as a colleague, it is a challenge. In the location courtesy is not such an issue, yes you greet older people and you say thank you but it's not emphasized so much. The venting of anger is acceptable, you can lash out (hit something) and its ok but in white society you have to be controlled...The issue of talking loudly [blacks talk louder than white people] its acceptable in the location, but not at work. At work you must have manners, talk softly, be courteous. You must hold the door for a woman, that doesn't happen in the location... They are different worlds"* (Source File: Wilson, Case 36, Johannesburg manager)

Ways of showing respect, deference, politeness and dealing with irritation or anger are different in some of the African cultures. Wilson's comments above highlight the differences between the world that he grew up in the townships and the world in



which he now works. He has had to adapt to the different ways of behaving that are required in his working environment in order to succeed according to the organisations standards.

Essentially black African managers are required to act, behave and work like whites do. One of the respondents mentioned that this pressure to conform to the white business/New Capitalist way of doing things can break the spirit of young black managers as the environment is so different to what they have known before.

*"Yes, I do feel a lot of pressure... especially in this sort of environment it's easy to break a person's spirit."*(Source File: Miriam, Case 38, Johannesburg manager)

One particular aspect of New Capitalism is transformation and in this country it is at the forefront of the changes that are taking place particularly around race relations. The urgency to ensure that transformation of organisations is efficient and effective has created implications for black employees. One respondent, a young woman, expressed her frustration at being considered a poster figure for transformation. She highlighted the different ways that she is treated and the special treatment she receives because she is a highly educated and competent young black female that the company clearly doesn't want to lose. Executives who have never worked with her pop into her office to see how she is doing and insist that if she is ever unhappy that she must bring it to their attention. She is brought in on meetings that she may not normally be brought in on to be the visible representative of black Africans at her level. As a result she perceives herself to be seen as different to her other colleagues and works extremely hard to prove that she is there not only because of the colour of her skin. She perceives failure as not an option.

*"... right now this whole transformation (exercise) is not being handled very well... people don't necessarily always respect each other in terms of their capabilities, you know you do get comments like 'oh ja you're set because you're black and you're female'... I do tend to feel that to a large extent ...from the company's perspective I'm helping them with their numbers. That's not the kind of person I want to be... I don't think transformation has been that great, there is a sense that I'm part of this farce...that doesn't really make me very happy."* (Source File: Tembi, Case 33, Johannesburg manager)

The pressure to ensure transformation succeeds and doesn't hinder the business functions has created a situation where those who are black and highly successful are seen as examples and treated as such. It creates extremely high expectations that can become burdens in these individual's working lives.

## **Gender issues**

Gender issues came out particularly strongly when I was talking to the black African women in Johannesburg. Women feel that they have to make twice as much effort to prove themselves. Young, black women are having a particularly hard time because of the cultural challenges that they face. A young black woman placed in an environment that is largely made up of older black males has to confront issues around cultural expectations of gender roles and superiority. One of the female respondents described her experience of being recruited into a management team where all her colleagues were black African males who refused to accept her as a member of the team. She was obliged to find ways of connecting with them through sport and other current affairs to try and break through the perception they had of her.

*"...we come from the environment or the culture where a man regardless of their age they will always be better than you. Or they will always be at a higher rank than you. And now we're coming in a different world where we are all equal and I mean it's not easy for them to accept it. It's not easy for us to stand up to them... you have to have a way to say it, because in another way it can be viewed as disrespect..."* (Source File: Lucy, Case 39, Johannesburg manager)

Lucy felt that it impacted hugely on her ability to perform particularly when she has to speak out against something that one of her male colleagues has said. For her it was a fine line that she had to maintain between the working relationship and the accepted gender roles of her culture.

Another female manager described how her inputs were regularly ignored in meetings and it forced her to seek allies in the office.

*"...you must find the allies, you know...you must find your male allies. And so what I do is I find my male allies. And I will say something to John and I know that when John speaks he will replicate what I have said and they will support him. And then he will then say, 'You know, this is from Miriam; what else do you think we can do here, Miriam?'"* (Source File: Miriam, Case 38, Johannesburg manager)

Women are forced to find ways to be accepted as equals. This is not a new issue but for black African female managers it is an extra source of frustration and in some instances, discrimination.

Gender issues came out far stronger than race issues in the Johannesburg office, particularly when speaking to the women. This may be because with race becoming less of an issue it has normalised the workplace and the age old challenges that women have always faced are coming to the surface again.

## **6.2 Managing Strategies: Cape Town vs. Johannesburg**

The findings above have highlighted a number of challenges or borders that black African managers face within The Company. In order to manage these challenges in such a way that their working lives don't clash too much with their out of work lives; managers adopt strategies in order to negotiate these challenges.

The strategies that managers adopt are influenced by a number of factors, the most important one being the social context in which they are situated, within this the key factors of social context are the issues of race and 'laid-backness'. There are several outcomes that can result from the choice of strategy: Managers are able to either, maintain their own identity by resisting the organisations attempts to re-socialise them and become defensive towards the organisation, they adopt the organisations desired behaviours, culture, etc without much questioning and in such a way choose a colluding strategy, they capitulate to the needs of the organisation because resisting has become too costly an option so they warily conform to the organisations needs, or they integrate aspects of their own culture and that of the organisation to create a hybrid culture that allows them to bridge the differences between the two cultures.

I have used Casey's (1995) categorisations to describe the strategies chosen by managers:

<b>Management strategies of black African managers in the Cape Town office of The Company</b>	
<b>Integrators:</b> Xola (Case 23) Mbulelo (Case 43)	<b>Capitulators:</b> Thomas (Case 12) – pragmatic capitulator David (Case 16) – pragmatic capitulator
<b>Defensives:</b> Amelia (Case 22) – frantic defensive Shelley (Case 27) – resistant defensive Anna (Case 7) – introverted defensive	<b>Colluders:</b> Thozama (Case 26) – compulsive colluder

2/8 of the Cape Town respondents were located in an integration strategy, 2/8 in a capitulating strategy, 3/8 in a defensive strategy and 1/8 in a colluding strategy.

<b>Management strategies of black African managers in the Johannesburg office of The Company</b>	
<b>Integrators:</b> Sam (Case 41)	<b>Defensives:</b> Wilson (Case 36) – introverted defensive Tembi (Case 33) – introverted defensive Gugile (Case 35) – resistant defensive
<b>Capitulators:</b> Thambo (Case 31) – reluctant capitulator Julius (Case 32) – reluctant capitulator Themba (Case 34) – pragmatic capitulator Lucy (Case 39) – pragmatic capitulator Miriam (Case 38) – pragmatic capitulator	<b>Colluders:</b> Matthew (Case 37) – compulsive colluder Peter (Case 29) – compulsive colluder Tessa (Case 42) – compulsive colluder John (Case 30) – compulsive colluder Thandile (Case 40) – compulsive colluder

In Johannesburg, 1/14 managers were located in an integrating strategy, 5/14 in a capitulating strategy, 3/14 in a defensive strategy and 5/14 in a colluding strategy.

The choice of strategy in the Cape Town respondents appears to be spread across three of the four strategy options; a greater number are located in the defensive strategy whereas the integration and capitulating strategy make up the rest, with very few Cape Town respondents being located in the colluding strategy. In Johannesburg the majority of respondents were located in the capitulating and colluding strategy with very few located in either the integrating or defensive strategies.

The social context in Cape Town and Johannesburg are quite different and as a result managers experience different borders related to this difference. In Cape Town there is a much greater prevalence of race issues whereas in Johannesburg there is very little. Cape Town is perceived to be 'laid-back' where Johannesburg is not and this affects the Johannesburg managers who have to commute between the two cities.

The Cape Town social context still contains aspects of a racially divided society. This is an inherent aspect of the Old Capitalist way that is still very prevalent in the Cape Town office. The New Capitalist focus on transformation that has been emphasised in the employment laws, has become a core goal and focus for companies in South Africa. The challenge for The Company in Cape Town is that it is still following Old Capitalist ideals where race is still a discriminating factor. Black Africans working in this organisation have greater difficulty fitting into the workplace than their colleagues in other parts of the country. The borders they encounter can have a marked effect on their sense of belonging whereas in Johannesburg black African managers' sense of belonging isn't threatened as much. As a result their coping strategies are different.

### **Defensive Strategy:**

The strategy in which the largest group of Cape Town respondents is located is the defensive strategy. The corporate culture is still inherently racist in many ways and these respondents refuse to accept this. Their reflex response is to stand up to it and challenge the system.

Many of the Cape Town managers said that they spoke out when they felt uncomfortable or didn't agree with something, for some this outspokenness has become a barrier to their potential for promotion because they are showing traits that The Company doesn't want in a senior manager. The Company subtly discourages overt shows of resistance and those who regularly take up a challenging position on issues are tagged as too 'militant' or 'unstable', i.e. not a 'Company person'.

*"...we have no say whatsoever... as a black woman they don't listen to you...so (I like to) speak out. But usually you find the powers that be, they don't like that, they don't want to deal*

*with the issue, they would rather come and stamp on you without listening to your response. And each time you come to them, they say 'Oh, we know you always have an answer'. And then I say, 'what the hell, did you expect me to just shut-up?! I'm no kid, I won't just shut up!'"* (Source File: Amelia, Case 22, Cape Town manager)

The respondents who chose a defensive strategy often were the ones who spoke out the most and in more than half of the cases this was through exasperation although there was a realisation that their behaviour was having an effect on their position within The Company and in particular their opportunities for promotion:

*"...there are no career prospects for me because I am known to call a spade a spade, and I don't care who it is for as long as you step on my corns then I will jump, I don't care who it is... in terms of career advancement, no, I mean they have made it clear, they haven't said it in so many words, but their actions show me that I have no career prospects."* (Source File: Amelia, Case 22, Cape Town manager)

There are, however, different types of defensives. Those that speak out are more likely to be frantic or resistant defensives and in these cases, demonstrated by the above quote, the managers are so frustrated that they cannot help but challenge what they believe is wrong at the risk of future promotion opportunities. Introverted defensives are less vocal but no less resistant in their actions. Anna doesn't speak out with as much volatility as Amelia but she has long given up any loyalty to The Company and is just waiting around until something better comes along:

*"Interviewer: How do you manage these challenges?"*

*Anna: I take an 'I don't care' attitude. I'm hanging on until another opportunity knocks"*  
(Source File: Anna, Case 7, Cape Town manager)

The defensive managers in Johannesburg differ significantly from their defensive colleagues in Cape Town because the issues in Cape Town are largely race related. The defensive managers in Johannesburg are reacting to different challenges. For example, Tembi is reacting to race challenges but her experience is largely around positive discrimination and being treated as a poster child for transformation:

*I know I'm capable but the fact that I'm black means people have these pre-conceived notions of 'because you're black and female you're set'".* (Source File: Tembi, Case 33, Johannesburg manager)

She is experiencing positive discrimination that she feels uncomfortable with and she wishes it would normalise; hence she resists this special treatment. However Tembi is an introverted defensive, which means that although she does resist it is not overt and most of her colleagues won't notice this.

### **Capitulation Strategy**

Managers who adopt a capitulating strategy are often those who battle with certain parts of the culture. They choose to adopt certain aspects of the company culture, goals and behaviours because they are ambitious while secretly keeping a firm hold on the level of participation they are willing to afford the company. Capitulators are strategic and cunning in the way they adopt the corporate culture. Capitulators have defensive tendencies but they manage them differently to defensives. Capitulators distance themselves from the stimuli that would provoke a defensive. Capitulation may indicate a decision to work with the culture in order to minimise conflict in the workplace but it is also a calculated form of resistance, albeit in a very self controlled manner:

*"You've got to know how to address things at a particular moment without being too personal about it...you've got to take your battles very privately...and choose your responses very carefully. I must know the price that I'm willing to pay for certain things and that I can let go of the next level of promotion if I react to certain issues badly. You cannot alienate people; you've got to learn how to be diplomatic..."* (Source File: David, Case 16, Cape Town manager)

Those who are concerned about their potential to rise in the company ranks have taken a more cautious route having realised that certain defensive reactions do them a lot of harm; as a result they pick their battles carefully and weigh up the possible implications of such actions. Instead they use more diplomatic means, like speaking to a person in private rather than hauling them over the coals in public and generally

treating people with extreme care and suspicion. This process of constantly assessing your response style and managing people's perceptions of you in difficult situations can be a very tiring exercise but a necessary one if the manager wants to succeed in The Company.

Thambo has adopted a reluctant capitulator strategy. He does not agree with much of the way things are done in The Company and as a result is not totally aligned with the requirements for being a typical Company manager:

*"Interviewer: If you were independent of OM and running your own similar business would you manage things differently?"*

*Thambo: Most certainly I would... well I've got issues (with the mentoring system) I see there's a lot of favouritism and a lack of openness and honesty in some cases and I often see issues of agendas."* (Source File: Thambo, Case 31, Johannesburg manager)

However, in order to further his career he has decided to make the effort to try to be a 'The Company' manager as far as is possible:

*"I suppose that I do espouse to be a typical (The Company) manager"* (Source File: Thambo, Case 31, Johannesburg manager)

The capitulators in Cape Town and Johannesburg are both battling aspects of the culture that they don't agree with however for the sake of their careers they have decided to adopt certain aspects of the culture in order to keep their ambitions safe. Cape Town has far fewer capitulators than Johannesburg and this may be because in Cape Town the culture is more difficult to adopt (due to the race issues) and thus more manager's resort to defensive strategies.

## **Colluding Strategy**

Two thirds of the Johannesburg managers felt that the working environment in Johannesburg is a healthy one based on working hard and furthering the business imperatives.



*"It is a highly challenging environment, people are dynamic, there are various kinds of people, the work itself is challenging on its own, it's highly demanding..."* (Source File: Tessa, Case 42, Johannesburg manager)

Most managers spent a long time talking about the work challenges that they experience, social or racial challenges weren't as prevalent. This shows a strong influence of the New Capitalist ideology having an effect on managers working lives. Although it creates challenges for managers they do believe in the ideology and what is required, and endeavour to be good managers according to the needs of the company. Hence the colluding strategy is far more prevalent in the Johannesburg office than in Cape Town.

Colluders have full faith and belief in The Company and fervently believe that they are in the right place for their employment needs. These individuals insist that race is not an issue and that the challenges they encounter are entirely work related and can be solved by working harder. These are the kinds of people that The Company encourages and promotes into positions of power. A person who fully accepts and adopts the culture and goals of the organisation causes very little friction; one could almost call them 'hassle-free' employees.

*"I love working at The Company, I must be honest, I just can't understand why, there is just something that is going on in The Company that I think I like and I cannot really (put my finger on it) ... its something that's tapped into your soul ... I feel part and parcel of it... I feel like its part of me. It's like if I don't work for The Company ... some part of me will go away, that's how I feel."* (Source File: Thandile, Case 40, Johannesburg manager)

Colluders are compulsively optimistic about The Company and don't allow themselves to recognise the less desirable aspects of the corporate culture. They conveniently ignore these. However, interestingly Thandile expresses all the signs of a colluder in Johannesburg but when she is in Cape Town she acts like a defensive. When in Cape Town she encounters the race issues and this leaves her feeling very insecure.

*"...when I get to Cape Town people just don't know how to deal with you and it scares me at times... I had to come out of my comfort zone to be in Cape Town. When I'm in Cape Town I*

*feel that people look at me and think “What does she know?” A week ago I had to let off some steam with one lady in Cape Town, I told her where to get off. I couldn’t stop! In Jo’burg I don’t have this problem.* (Source File: Thandile, Case 40, Johannesburg manager)

Thandile’s experience shows the big differences between the two branches of The Company. If she were living in Cape Town and working at the branch there, she would most probably adopt much more defensive strategies than she does in Johannesburg.

## **Integration Strategy**

One quarter of the Cape Town respondents have chosen a strategy that acts as a bridge between their own culture and the culture of The Company. Managers who are located in the integration strategy have created a hybrid culture that integrates the important aspects of both their own and The Company’s culture. The managers who fall into this strategy are well positioned within the organisation and are considered by many people within The Company to be the new generation of leaders. They have an enormous amount of responsibility to both The Company and their fellow colleagues to make the environment work for them. They are also very ambitious in where they see themselves in the future and use this strategy as a way to further their goals.

*“...you constantly have to adjust yourself...you remain yourself but you adjust so that you can fit in with the situation...(You need to ask yourself)how do I then position myself so as to ensure that at the end of the day I still get what I want in terms of my own deliverables.”*

(Source File: Xola, Case 23, Cape Town manager)

Race is an issue that integrating managers take in their stride. Because these managers are placed fairly high up in the organisation they have a different perspective on many of the situations that occur in the organisation to the perspective that other managers may have. Mbulelo is one of the most senior managers in The Company and his strategy takes into account the issues of race but he doesn’t let it worry him and moves forward rather than dwelling on the race issues. He can look past these contemporary issues towards a future that he is in the process of developing with others like him.

*"Being black is an issue... yes it's there. There are people that think that you are inexperienced... I've built myself to be very strong as a person and that's how I deal with it. I've actually realised that there's no point worrying about what others say, I do what I think is right."* (Source File: Mbulelo, Case 43, Cape Town manager)

The borders that managers experience in Cape Town and Johannesburg are different. Cape Town is largely weighed down by issues of race and to some extent laid-backness although the evidence does not show that this has much of an affect on the managing strategies that managers adopt. Issues around 'laid-backness' certainly come out in the borders that managers experience but not with as much emphasis as the issue of race. The Cape Town managers are clearly having difficulty managing these borders as their managing strategies indicate whereas the Johannesburg managers appear to be managing far better. One of the reasons for this may be the mentoring network that Johannesburg managers have created.

Johannesburg managers have created a more developed network of people who share their same culture and values than the Cape Town office. This is easier due to the nature of the social context in Johannesburg and that it is traditionally a region with more black Africans. Half of the managers interviewed explicitly spoke about approaching mentors for advice on challenges and issues; from discussions with these respondents it is clear that this is a widely used practice within Johannesburg office of The Company for dealing with challenges and issues. All these mentors were people working within the business. Some of the managers, particularly the women, have developed sophisticated systems whereby they are able to circumvent certain challenges that they know may arise, e.g. forming allies. The quotes below give some indication as to the how common this practice is:

*"I do receive mentorship for from some of my senior colleagues ... so that whenever there are issues that confront me and I feel that I need an extra head in also for me to be able to resolve it and for people who have been long in this industry I look up to them and I consult them whenever needed."* (Source File: Julius, Case 32, Johannesburg manager)

The defensive strategy appears to be more prevalent in the Cape Town branch than in Johannesburg. There is a very definite reaction to the issues of race in Cape Town whereas there is substantially less so in Johannesburg. The capitulating strategy is more prevalent in Johannesburg and this may be because managers in Cape Town are not able to move beyond their defensiveness into a state of capitulation. They are too frustrated with the issues of race and the frustrating elements of Old Capitalism to be able to reconcile some of the better aspects and be able to pull back and become more cynical. The colluding strategy is dominant in the Johannesburg branch and is almost non-existent in Cape Town. This may be because there are so few instances of race and the new up-and-coming black African managers thrive on the New Capitalist pace of business, whereas New Capitalism is struggling to gain a foothold in the Cape Town branch and this frustrates the black African managers there who are waiting to embrace this ideology. The integration strategy is largely adopted by managers in the Cape Town office who are at a very senior level. These managers have been able to gain a bird's-eye-view of the transition towards New Capitalism whilst being able to take into account the challenges that Cape Town faces. They have been able to bridge these challenges and are moving towards their goal without being held back by the challenges that are plaguing some of their colleagues.

## **7. Discussion of Findings**

The central focus of this dissertation was to investigate to what extent the different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence the organisational culture of the company in those places and how this impacts on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace? My hypothesis was that race and 'laid-backness' are the major differentials between these two places. However the evidence has not supported this. Race is very clearly still a major issue in Cape Town where it is not in Johannesburg, but the evidence doesn't support my claim that 'laid-backness' is as important a factor as I initially thought it was. There is an element of public perception around the existence of a much more laid-back attitude to the way Cape Town does business but this largely emerged in comments made by Johannesburg respondents and this mostly had to do with the inefficiency of having a head office in Cape Town when many of its important functions were needed in Johannesburg. It is not clear whether it is the 'laid-backness' of Cape Town, the distance between these two branches or any number of other factors that causes this inefficiency and as a result, this section of my hypothesis is not valid.

However, in this chapter I will be discussing a number of observations that arose from the findings: the influence of social history and social environment on organisational culture and black experiences of belonging and identity; the problem of identity and belonging amongst black African managers and its link to motivation and productivity in an organisation that is in transition; New Capitalism creates the possible beginnings of an African Renaissance.

### **7.1 The Influence of Social History and Environment on Organisational Culture and Black Experiences of Belonging and Identity**

The findings have indicated that Cape Town and Johannesburg are two very different cities. The history of each city has determined its current social environment. This social environment has had considerable influence on the social environment at The

Company. As the findings have shown, the organisational culture in Cape Town is still heavily weighed down by issues of race; this is contrasted by the lack of race issues in Johannesburg. These differences mirror those in the social context of the two cities.

Recent articles in the press have emphasised the challenges that Cape Town (and the Western Cape in general) faces with regard to the high levels of race sensitivity in this region. "Cape Town is a contested city. On the one hand, it is romanticised as the Mother City -- a place enriched by its cultural history and racial diversity, a forum for international conventions and tourism, an international landmark of great natural beauty and stature. On the other, it is damned as a racist city, riven by its cultural divisions, that has historically given preference to whites and coloureds at the expense of black Africans. In that view, it's a broken place that needs to be mended."

(Edmonds, 2006) President Thabo Mbeki emphasised the challenge that the Western Cape faces in the road to a non-racial society in a speech he made to the ANC's Western Cape provincial executive committee: "Building a non-racial society is one of South Africa's greatest challenges, but nowhere is it more challenging than in the Western Cape. There is a greater sensitivity to issues of race in this region than anywhere else in the country." (Cape Times, August 28 2006: 1)

Cape Town's history is responsible for these major challenges. It has traditionally been a white and coloured enclave that has always endeavoured to keep black African's out. Where this is no longer provincial policy it is still very much a part of the hearts and minds of those people who live in Cape Town and especially of those (particularly black Africans) who are trying to enter Cape Town in order to find better lives for them and their families. Nkululeko Mabandla (2006:184) states in Steven Watkins' book on Cape Town titled "*A City Imagined*" that there is "a frustrating intransigence about Cape Town towards transformation and attitude change - a maddening provinciality akin to backwardness or 'bumpkinism'". Mabandla (2006:184) goes on to say that "in a country of so many cultures like South Africa, there are still very few cross-cultural exchanges on any level, grass-roots or otherwise, in this city...".

These racial tensions have spilt over into the corporate environment at The Company. The quote below describes the experiences of a senior black African manager in Johannesburg who commutes regularly to Cape Town for business and has to deal with the race challenges that still prevail in this branch.

*“When I get to Cape Town people just don’t know how to deal with you. This one time a woman (from the Cape Town office) came into my office and asked me where I come from, what my qualifications are and where I’ve got my work experience! You know what, I’m not here by mistake. I’ve got qualifications and I’m more qualified than I need to be. I’ve got more experience than I need. I don’t understand what the fuss is about ... When you come in as a black person, they just don’t know how to fit in with you...these Capetonian’s have got a clique that is difficult to penetrate as a black person.”* (Source File: Thandile, Case 40, Johannesburg manager)

Having been ‘allowed in’ through affirmative action, many black managers are made to feel as though they don’t deserve to be there, no matter how qualified and competent they are (Qunta, 1995: 40). Black managers complain of getting less recognition for what they do than is given to their white colleagues although they put in as much effort and get similar results (Luhabe, 2002: 27).

The result is that black African managers do not feel that they belong in the Cape Town part of the business and this is reinforced by the behaviour of some of their colleagues. This affects the way that black African managers negotiate identity in the workplace. In Cape Town the largest proportion of those interviewed were located in the defensive strategy. These managers do not feel that they are able to break into the social environment in their office. There are too many aspects of the culture that they cannot adopt or do not agree with and so they resist. For some of these individuals going to work is equated with going into battle (Luhabe, 2002: 33)

The Company in Cape Town has been imprinted with the racist social history of the social environment that has since colonial times protected white and coloured interests. The situation in Johannesburg is very different though. Johannesburg is considered to be: *“...a place of pride, a place of history, a place of liberation, it’s a place of African wealth, technology, education and culture.”* (Nuttal, 2004(2): 443).

It's considered to be a place of new beginnings, where racial diversity has little bearing on ability and where business needs are paramount. Johannesburg has always had a black African majority, even during the deepest parts of Apartheid when most blacks were kept out of the city. This has provided black Africans with a greater sense of stability and belonging. Johannesburg is their city.

*"Jo'burg is a different animal. Jo'burg is very dynamic, cosmopolitan; people don't have racial or race issues you know it's all about work and performance...being black isn't a challenge in Jo'burg, definitely not."* (Source File: Temba, Case 34, Johannesburg manager)

This has impacted on the social environment in the Johannesburg branch of The Company. A large proportion of the Johannesburg managers were located in the colluding strategy and this indicates support for the company culture. New Capitalism is fast becoming entrenched in the Johannesburg branch's culture and black African managers are attracted to the ideologies of New Capitalism as it promotes a fast-paced, business-focussed, non-racial, competitive environment that provides them with the scope to focus on creating an African future rather than dwelling on the Old Capitalist/discriminatory past.

## **7.2 The Problem of Identity and Belonging amongst black African managers and its link to Motivation and Productivity**

Middle, senior and executive managers have an enormous amount of influence on an organisation. They are the individuals who lead the rest of the organisation towards its goals. They inspire and integrate the norms and values of the organisation. Essentially they are the ones who create and implement the corporate culture. Managers at these senior levels are expected to live the values, goals and culture of the business.

"Management is an open-ended activity in that what is done and thought is affected by the prevailing economic, social and political values and institutions" (Wren, 2001: 17) The management process is deliberately structured to inspire and integrate certain norms and values and to produce predetermined results in the broader economic, political, and socio-cultural contexts (Wren, 2001: 17). This is the organisations' way of influencing their own environment through their people – particularly their



managers. "Management capacity is the totality of skills, knowledge, experience, and talents imperative to the effective and efficient running of organisations" (Wren, 2001: 18). Managers are vital to an organisation but if a manager is questioning his/her identity and is lacking a sense of belonging then it is very likely that this will impact on the motivation and productivity of the individual manager, which has consequences for the organisation. "One's sense of validity as a human being declines where one's culture is seen to be inferior, for in effect one's very humanity is under question." (Human, 1991: 120)

An important aspect in the motivation of managers is in their training and more importantly in the way in which they are integrated into the organisation. The mentoring relationship between a new manager and their superior is vital for the transfer of information, support, encouragement and advice that is necessary for the new manager to do their job. When this mentoring relationship breaks down or is ineffective it has dire consequences for the new manager and ultimately for the organisation that is not getting the full potential out of an employee that it has placed in a key position.

White managers at The Company in Cape Town appear not to be able to effectively mentor black managers because there is a lack of common understanding and culture. Many of the older white managers are still accustomed to the Old Capitalist way of doing things where there would have been no chance for a black person to be mentored into a senior position. This leads to a lack of willingness to understand black managers because of latent discriminatory (and possibly even threatened) feelings in the white managers. Linda Human (1991: 6) states that "the problem of negative attitudes towards the capabilities of Blacks is profound...The feelings of inferiority engendered by racism can lead to an internalised negative expectancy which, in turn, can lead to...a feeling that 'I haven't got what it takes', thus reinforcing negative expectations. Human (1991: 323) goes on to say that "the internalisation of inferiority' is not a 'black' phenomenon; it is a downward psychological process reinforced or stimulated by negative expectations..."

Wendy Luhabe (2002: 164) speaks to this issue by highlighting the lack of black role models, which results in a lack of support from the more senior managers who

traditionally support those who are of the same gender and race group (predominantly white and male) as themselves. Kevin Cokley, George Dreher and Margaret Stockdale (2004: 173) also talk about how important it is to have an influential mentor or network of influential relationships for an individual's career success. The tendency is for people to form close relationships with people who are similar to them and because the most influential people in organisations tends to be white men, blacks are often disadvantaged in securing these sorts of relationships. Human and Hofmeyr (1985: 101) suggest that the relationship between black subordinates and their white managers can easily become paternalistic. When a mentoring or coaching relationship occurs between two people of the same race this appeared to take the more natural course of a friendly and supportive working relationship than when it was between two people of different races.

The lack of effective mentoring and support for the managers in Cape Town leaves them feeling as if they don't fit in with the culture, as Human (1991: 121) states, "poor interpersonal relationships are a demotivator" and that results in lower productivity.

The situation in Johannesburg however, appears to be different. The Johannesburg managers appear to have developed a sophisticated mentoring and support system that helps them to manage their identity and negotiate problems as they arise. The Company has recognised the differences between the Cape Town section of the business and the Johannesburg section and the significant influence that the social context has on productivity. As a result, many of the core functions are being moved from Cape Town to Johannesburg in an attempt to reconcile all the key business functions in one location.

The issue of providing a positive mentoring environment for black Africans is a very important one. Positive role models are essential for the motivation of future black African managers. There are currently very few senior black African managers who can fulfil this kind of role and for those who can there is enormous pressure. The Johannesburg branch is far further ahead of the Cape Town office however senior successful managers from both these branches expressed views of feeling under pressure by the huge responsibility as a 'black person' that was now heaped on their

shoulders. In time this should change, but unless Cape Town adopts more of transformational attitude it will be a long road for black African managers in this region, in Johannesburg though, the future is far brighter.

### **7.3 New Capitalism creates the possible beginnings of an African Renaissance.**

The New Capitalist ideology puts pressure on organisations to provide the best service to clients, to ensure that transformation succeeds without disrupting the core business functions, and to be competitive within the global market. This pressure filters down to all levels of the business. However, black African managers are experiencing a further pressure to align with the culture that is in many instances foreign to their own. There is huge pressure to become the results-driven manager that the organisation 'breeds', there are other pressures related to the need to adopt a Western manner when in the workplace or with clients and this can also be seen as a pressure to adopt a 'white way of doing things'.

Motshabi (1991: 8) argues that the Westcentric focus of business culture in South Africa leads to feelings of alienation amongst many black employees and that this leads to demotivation. This Westcentric focus is still a left over of the previous Old Capitalist system that was uncompromising in the need for one all-encompassing culture. However, Stuart Hall (1997:29) has now suggested that although Capitalism is still centred in the West it now recognises that "it can only rule through other local capitals, rule alongside and in partnership with other economic and political elites. It does not attempt to obliterate them; it operates through them." Essentially what Hall is saying is that Capitalism no longer over-rules or dictates that a culture must change entirely to a Western oriented way of doing things, it now takes into account that there is difference between cultures and that these cultures can "be penetrated, absorbed, reshaped, negotiated, without absolutely destroying what is specific and particular to them" (Hall, 1997: 29).

This provides a great opportunity to the young up-and-coming black African managers who are the culture brokers for the change that is happening in South Africa

(and in Johannesburg in particular). They are drawn to the fast-paced, entrepreneurial, constantly-changing, dynamic environment that New Capitalism demands. Black African managers are in the position where the environment is ripe for them to mould capitalism into a form that could herald the possible beginnings of an African Renaissance or a New African Capitalism. Opportunities to affect this sort of change are more likely to be embraced in Johannesburg where there are few remnants of Old Capitalism holding it back. Managers who were located in the integrating strategy are in the process of changing the culture around them. They create a hybrid culture that bridges the older more Westcentric culture and the newer influences of African culture. By influencing the way in which New Capitalism impacts the organisation, black African managers can ensure their own success in the current white, male, Westcentric working environment. As New Capitalism becomes further entrenched as an ideology, the demographic change that is essential to transformation and greater diversity, will allow black African managers greater freedom to mould the culture around them and this provides them with a way in which they can engage with global capitalism on their own terms.

## 8. Conclusion

South Africa has been through a series of major transitions in the last twelve years and some of the biggest have been in the area of business. South African business has joined the global economy and this has introduced major changes in how business is done in this country. South Africa's apartheid history has left a legacy of white, male dominated organisations that are now required to change their demographics according to legislated preference policies. The history of South Africa has also left an imprint in the social contexts of its cities. Historically Johannesburg has always had a large black African population. Cape Town on the other hand started out as a colony, populated largely by whites and Coloureds. The coloured labour preference policies kept black Africans out of the Cape and this has resulted in there being a much smaller black population in the Western Cape. Some of the biggest challenges that face South African businesses today involve the management of diversity in companies that have traditionally been white, male and Western dominated.

This dissertation set out to investigate how different social environments in Cape Town and Johannesburg influence organisational culture in those places and how this impacts on the ways that black African managers navigate borders and negotiate identity in the workplace.

The major findings of this study show that race is a considerable challenge to black African managers in the Cape Town office of The Company whereas it is far less so in the Johannesburg office. Black African managers in Cape Town are dealing with more race issues and this clouds their experience within the organisation. 75% of Cape Town respondents mentioned that race is an issue that they deal with on a daily basis; they feel ignored, marginalised, their opinions are not respected and they have to work twice as hard to prove that they are not just affirmative action employees and that they can actually do their jobs to a high standard. Discrimination is subtly covert but is still an aggravating factor and as black individuals you are likely to experience more challenges in the workplace than any other race group. Race is an element of Old Capitalism and is one of the barriers that hold back black African advancement in The Company. This is particularly evident in the lack of effective mentoring for

blacks and leaves them feeling inadequately encouraged and supported. Black African manager's promotional opportunities are also hampered by a well-developed white 'Old Boy' network that supports white men in the organisation.

The Johannesburg corporate culture has largely adopted the New Capitalist ideologies of entrepreneurship, transformation, employee accountability and aggressive competition. Race is a minor issue in the corporate environment where work challenges dominate. The race issues that Johannesburg managers face arise mostly when dealing with clients (including black clients). There was a strong perception from the Johannesburg respondents that Cape Town is heavily racialised and that this impedes the work being done there. Gender also came up in the Johannesburg interviews and this could be an indication of a neutralising of race issues leaving room for other issues to come to the surface.

The issue of 'laid-backness' appeared not to be as prominent as I initially thought. It is a perception that many Johannesburg respondents have of the attitude in Cape Town but the evidence did not sufficiently support my initial claim that it is a key differentiating factor between the Cape Town and Johannesburg offices

Due to these challenges managers have adopted strategies that help them negotiate the working environment. In the Cape Town office the dominant strategies are defence and integration. The defensive managers are battling with the corporate culture and so they challenge the status quo with negative consequences for their career. The integrators take a very different path and bridge the gap between their own culture and the company culture by creating a hybrid culture that incorporates the important aspects of both cultures. Managers who adopt this strategy are highly ambitious and have realised that there are big differences between themselves and the company they work for, but they have managed to bridge this divide in a manner that optimises results. Johannesburg managers adopted different strategies to the Cape Town managers. Collusion and capitulation were the most prevalent. There is a far greater support for The Company in Johannesburg and as a result the negotiation strategies are more tempered than in Cape Town.

Social history and social environment do have an influence on the organisational culture of The Company and by extension this impacts on the black African managers working there. Cape Town's racist history has permeated The Company culture in Cape Town whereas this is not the case in Johannesburg. Black African managers have to navigate race borders and align themselves with a company culture that sometimes they may not agree with and this has a detrimental effect on their identity in the workplace. They do not feel that they belong and this impacts negatively on their motivation and productivity. The Johannesburg office had far less of this challenge because the mostly New Capitalist ideology that is being followed there suited most of the black African managers and provides them with an opportunity to mould the culture to their benefit.

The Company is one of the largest organisations in South Africa. It is in the process of several major changes including the move of several core business departments from Cape Town to Johannesburg. The Company has spent a lot of time and money ensuring that it has the best advice on how to transform their organisation according to the requirements of the South African legislation and the expectations of the South African people, whilst keeping up with global competition. The Company is experiencing pressures from both the local and international arenas, which can be opposing in their nature and demands. Managing these challenges is not an easy or straight-forward task. The issue that stands out in my mind is how to maximise the results of the organisation whilst retaining and motivating a dynamic workforce. The Company is pushing forward into new areas often at the cost of their employees. When this is accompanied by issues like race it can cause major friction amongst employees, particularly black Africans. My main recommendation would be to further assist all employees to better understand the people that are working with them in an attempt to bridge prejudices and stereotypes that harm the organisation in the long run.

The potential for further research in this field is extensive. I have chosen to study a small section of one organisation. This study could be expanded on by comparing the experiences of the other race groups in the two social contexts within The Company. It would also be interesting to spend some time focussing on the Coloured community in Cape Town as their experience in post-apartheid South Africa has been a difficult

and challenging one, especially in the business environment. It would then also be useful to expand the study to compare The Company with other organisations in the same sector and then with companies from other sectors as well.

I believe that the future of South African business is hugely promising. This country is dynamic, culturally diverse and has a lot to offer the global community. However it is important to remember that one needs to invest in the local in order to be a success internationally. The Company is experiencing challenges influenced by social contexts and different business ideologies. By extension this influences the way employees experience the working environment. By taking this into account one can better understand why there are challenges and how to neutralise or overcome them.

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